

A MARVEL MAGAZINE/SPRING 1980/\$2.00

EC 02020

# epic

ILLUSTRATED

Premiere Issue

A new experience  
in adult fantasy  
and science-fiction  
adventure

Frank Frazetta  
079





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## editorial

# The Next Plateau

**F**orgive us if we sound presumptive but EPIC ILLUSTRATED is more, far more, than merely another new magazine. EPIC heralds the dramatic start of a new era in publishing, an era which proudly presents the long-awaited marriage of superb illustration and the best in imaginative fiction.

We live in a visual era, a visual society. Motion pictures, television, multimedia productions of every type comprise the very fabric of today's communications. Not only have we learned full well that a picture is worth a thousand words, but we've also learned that the proper combination of the two can result in a creative entertainment experience unmatched by any other format. Words and pictures—stories and books—truly, the cornerstones of knowledge, the basis of the legends which have ever thrilled mankind.

Still, there are many types of stories, many types of books. We at Marvel have built a modern publishing empire based upon one special type, and upon one flexible goal—we have always striven to create the most imaginative, the most unusual, the most fantastic and provocative tales of all.

Yet, so great has been the advancement of science, that the dividing line between truth and fiction, fact and fantasy, grows ever thinner. Yesterday's science fiction has become today's accepted fact. But the ability of man to dream, to fantasize, will always outstrip his equally awesome ability to transform those dreams to glorious reality.

Here at EPIC we are the gatherers of the dreams. No concept is too far-fetched, no theme is too far-out. There are no caveats, no taboos, no prohibitions or restrictions which our artists and writers need observe, just as there are no such limitations to what the human brain can conceive. Govenred only by our own personal com-



mitment to quality and good taste, the entire universe is grist for our creative mill, and each superlatively printed and illustrated issue is certain to become a valued collector's item the moment the copies have gone off-sale.

In two short decades, Marvel Comics has revolutionized the once-simplistic artform known as comic books. But what is past is merely prelude. Today, we stand at the threshold of a spectacular new undertaking, a project to which we dedicate our total energies, talents, and resources. Today, EPIC is the realization of a daring dream. Tomorrow, it will be the presager of a new form of publishing, a new form of art, a new form of literary communication, and—most intriguing of all—it will lead us along the fascinating trail of fantasy and saga, perhaps further than we have ever gone before!

# FEEDBACK

## letters & comments

For our premiere issue, we set writer Tom Rogers the task of soliciting comments from various well-known folks on the potential of a magazine like EPIC. In the future, this page will become a forum for your suggestions, opinions, questions, and criticisms. At the same time, we should be able to supply you with some of the hows, whys, and wherefores of putting together an on-going project like this. Hopefully, what we'll wind up with will be a dialogue between us. And through that dialogue, we hope EPIC will be a better magazine.

Archie Goodwin, editorial director

### Neal Adams

comics artist, paperback and advertising illustrator, head of Continuity Associates art studio, member of the Ad Hoc committee for the Comics Creators Guild

If Marvel Comics will make the type of contract that will guarantee the rights of the creative people working on Epic Illustrated, it will be something that will be a milestone in comic history. There is so much creative talent in the world, and if the writers and artists are given the freedom to do what they want to do, with that kind of contract, for that kind of publication, then potentially they can end up having the greatest magazine, or magazines, that has ever been produced. Marvel can do it, given the right contract, and the end result will be worth it. The potential is so great that, frankly, it's hard for me to even think of it. If Marvel can put together the right kind of situation, I feel that the untapped material that is available is truly vast, and it's just waiting for the right conditions to come along. There can be better stuff than we've ever had before, resulting in the type of fantastic comic book illustrations that make

your heart beat faster. I think it could work out extremely well. **\*\***

### Ray Bradbury

Author of *Fahrenheit 451*, *The Illustrated Man*, and *The Martian Chronicles*, which has recently been adapted into an NBC-TV mini-series  
**\*\*** To begin with, you have a very good selection of writers and artists. The concept for Epic Illustrated sounds exciting, but it depends on how well you do it. I'm somewhat familiar with Marvel Comics, and this is something new for them, apparently. With science-fiction films doing as well as they've been doing, and with the reprints of the old EC comics seeming to do well because people are going back and seeing some of the good work that was done, and with science fiction being taught in schools all the time now, I should think that you'd have a fairly large market. Somewhere along the line, it would be fascinating to pick a story of mine, and an illustrator that we all like, and adapt it to your magazine. I would love to see it succeed. I admire your courage, and it sounds like you're using your imagination. I look forward to seeing it. **\*\***

### George Pal

Film producer of *Destination Moon*, *War of the Worlds*, *The Time Machine*, and *The Seven Faces of Dr. Lao*

It sounds delightful. I am familiar a little with the magazine *Heavy Metal*, and I think you will make it better. I would be very interested in it, myself, because I am a big fan of science fiction. I am working on a new movie now, and my novel—a sequel to *The Time Machine*—will be out next year. I might like to do something for your publication someday. I think that there is a de-

nise market for this sort of thing, and I feel that your company can handle it properly. I wish you very good luck. **\*\***

### Joseph Stefano

Author of the screenplay for Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* and co-creator and producer of the tv anthology series *The Outer Limits*

**\*\*** Short text stories, together with illustrated ones. That sounds like a very good idea. I haven't been doing any of that kind of reading for a few years, since I was involved with *The Outer Limits*. However, I have found from my own experience that the science fiction/fantasy field has a tremendous appeal. Consequently, it's a very crowded field. What you suggest, though, is not overdone at this time. The magazines of this sort that I have seen tend to be very well done, and apparently yours will at least be equal to them. I wish you a lot of luck on this. **\*\***

### Ian Summers

Art director; author of *The Fantastic Art of the Brothers Hildebrandt*, and editor of *Tomorrow and Beyond*

**\*\*** I think it's a damn good concept. I think what you're doing is going after a lot of the Heavy Metal audience, and, I hope, in the right taste level. Not only is there room for the magazine, but I think that could do very well. I feel, absolutely, that it would succeed. I just hope that you keep the taste level up as high as you possibly can. If so, it has to succeed. I don't see how it can fail. **\*\***

All letters intended for this column should be addressed to:  
Feedback  
Epic Illustrated  
375 Madison Avenue, 6th Floor  
New York, New York 10022

**\*\*** If Marvel can put together the right kind of situation there can be better stuff than we've ever had before, the kind of fantastic comic book illustrations that make your heart beat faster. **\*\***

# THE ANSWER

THE PLANET IS NAMELESS. IT NEEDS NO NAME. NONE CAN FIND IT. NONE CAN REACH IT. NONE CAN CROSS ITS LONG-SHADE SURFACE. NONE BUT TWO. THESE TWO. THIS IS THEIR STORY.

WE STAND ON THE  
MOST REMOTE  
ASTEROID IN ALL  
THE UNIVERSE  
AND YET--

THE  
MYSTERY  
REMAINS.  
WHAT LIES  
BEYOND?  
WHERE  
DOES IT  
END?

A TALE OF THE SILVER SURFER

WE HAVE COME THIS FAR. WE MUST GO FURTHER. WE MUST LEARN THE ANSWER.



NONE THAT LIVE CAN KNOW THE ANSWER.

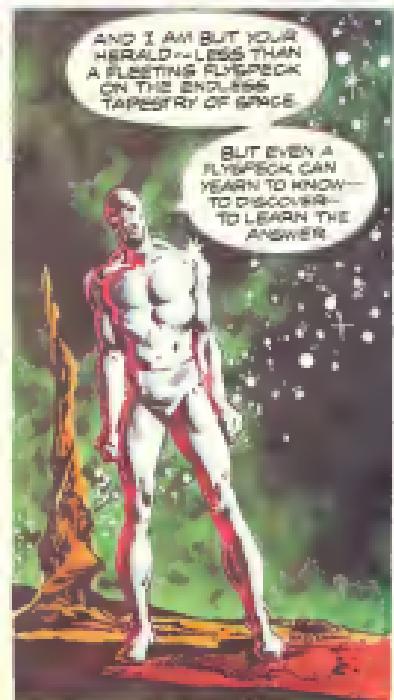
NOT EVEN YOU?



I AM GALACTUS. THOUGH I AM MORE THAN MAN, STILL AM I LESS THAN GOD.

AND I AM BUT YOUR HERALD—LESS THAN A FLEETING FLYSPACK ON THE ENDLESS TAPESTRY OF SPACE.

BUT EVEN A FLYSPACK CAN LEARN TO KNOW—TO DISCOVER—TO LEARN THE ANSWER.



THERE IS NO ANSWER.



YOU LIE! THERE  
IS NO PERFECT  
SECRET! THERE IS  
NO LOCK WITHOUT  
A KEY!

I AM A STRANGER TO UNTRUTH. MINE IS THE POWER  
ABSOLUTE. GALACTUS HAS NO CAUSE TO LIE.

THEN DO AS I  
IN THE QUEST. LET  
US SEE WHAT LIES  
BEYOND THE COSMOS.  
ONLY WE CAN FIND  
THE ANSWER.

THERE  
IS NO  
ANSWER.

I SPEAK THE TRUTH, AND YET,  
I KNOW THE SHAVING DOUBT.  
THE FEELING AGAIN THAT  
BURNS WITHIN YOUR BREAST.  
IN AGES PAST, GALACTUS,  
TOO, HAS FELT SUCH  
YEARNING.

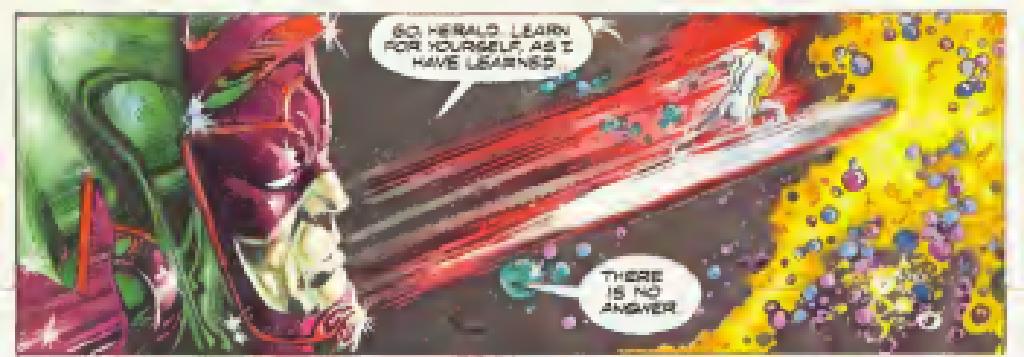
GO, THEN, SEEK  
THE ANSWER  
IF YOU MUST.

THE POWER COSMIC  
IS MINE TO COMMAND.  
TO STRIP AWAY THE  
FINAL VEIL OF  
DARKNESS.

AT LAST  
I'LL SEE WHAT  
WAITS BEYOND  
THE FARTHEST  
STAR--WHAT  
LIES BEYOND THE  
BRINK OF TIME  
ITSELF.

I  
MUST





GO, HERALD. LEARN FOR YOURSELF, AS I HAVE LEARNED.

THERE IS NO ANSWER.



I'LL GO WHERE NONE HAVE EVER BEEN. I'LL SEE WHAT NONE HAVE EVER BEEN.

AND I'LL NOT TURN BACK, THOUGH DEATH ITSELF SHOULD BAR THE WAY.



LATER, HOURS, DAYS, OR YEARS, THEY HAVE LITTLE MEANING IN DEEPEST SPACE.



THERE IS WHAT I SEEK, THE MOST BAFFLING SIGHT IN ALL THE HEAVENS—

AN EVER-GROWING, EVER-SWELLING FIGURE IN THE FABRIC OF SPACE ITSELF, A BLACK HOLE.

ONLY THERE, WITHIN ITS STYLIAN CORE, CAN ANTI-MATTER EXIST.



ONLY THERE WILL I FIND THE ENTRANCE TO ANOTHER UNIVERSE --THE SECRET OF INFINITY



FROM CAN WE, WITH INFINITE POSSIBILITIES,  
REVEAL THE UNREVEALABLE?  
HOW CAN YOU, WITH INFINITE POSSIBILITIES,  
BEHOLD THE UNBEHOLDABLE?

WHAT YOU SEE BEFORE YOU IS BUT A  
PALE AND GRIMMEST REPRESENTATION  
OF THE MOST INDESCRIBABLY AWESOME  
JOURNEY EVER LAUNCHED.



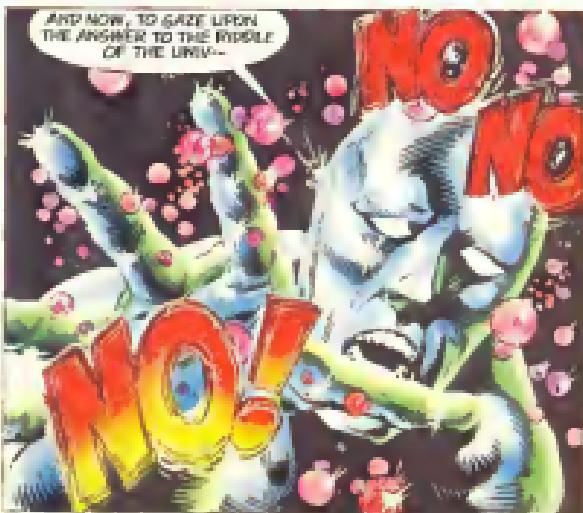
I'M DRAWN INTO  
A FROZEN,  
BURSTING WHIRLSTORM  
OF LIVING  
NOTHINNESS

ALL  
AROUND ME—  
POWER, SUCH AS NONE  
HAVE EVER KNOWN,  
CHURNING, BLINDING,  
DEAFENING, POWER,  
WITHOUT LIMIT,  
WITHOUT END

DEEPER AND DEEPER  
IT SUCKS ME INTO THE  
SWIRLING, SEETHING  
CENTER— TOWARDS  
THE VERY HEART OF  
THE MONSTROUS,  
ALIEN VOID.

Again, in a peace such as this, more time can have no meaning. It is enough to say - the message endures, until at last...

ONLY MY POWER COSMIC COULD HAVE SHIELDED ME FROM FORCES BEYOND HUMAN COMPREHENSION.





# HOMESPUN

SEEN SEE IT  
PETALWING FIND  
NEW STILLQUIET  
THING FOR BUT  
IN WRAPSTUFF!

FURSOFT  
CHARLEBABY  
SLEEP IN OLD  
BIRDBASKET!

IS  
PRETTY!

IS  
EASY-  
CATCH!

IS GOOD  
ALL OVER!

PETALWING  
KNOWS!  
PETALWING  
LOOKED!

IS NOT  
HURT...

---NOT  
DEAD---

JUST  
STILLQUIET!

TIME WE  
MAKE  
WRAPSTUFF!

HUSHUP  
NOW!

ONCE, THESE TWO, BEHEMOTH BEINGS CALLED  
THEMSELVES THE PRESERVERS...

NOW THEY SPIN THEIR  
SHIMMERING WEBB  
WITHOUT RHYME  
OR REASON --

BUT THAT WAS VERY LONG AGO, WHEN THEY COULD  
STILL REMEMBER WHO AND WHY THEY WERE!

--AND THE VERBANT VALLEY IN WHICH  
THEY DWELL IS SILVERED OVER WITH  
MYRIAD LUSTROUS COCOONS!

COCOONS WHICH THE PRESERVERS  
TEND WITH INFINITE CARE --

--BUT WHICH NEVER,  
NEVER HATCH!

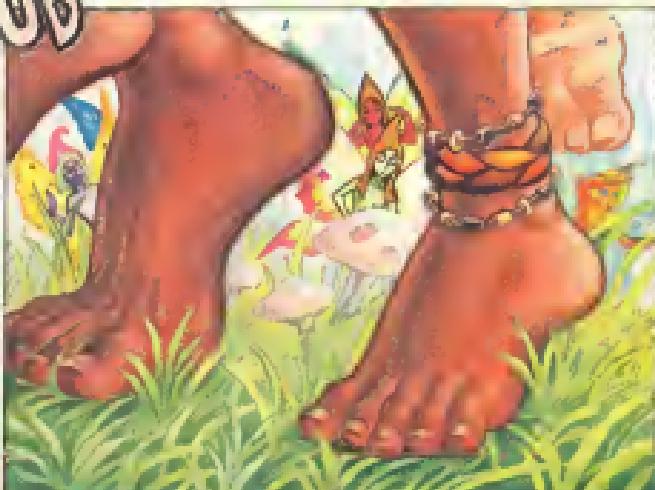
SPASH!

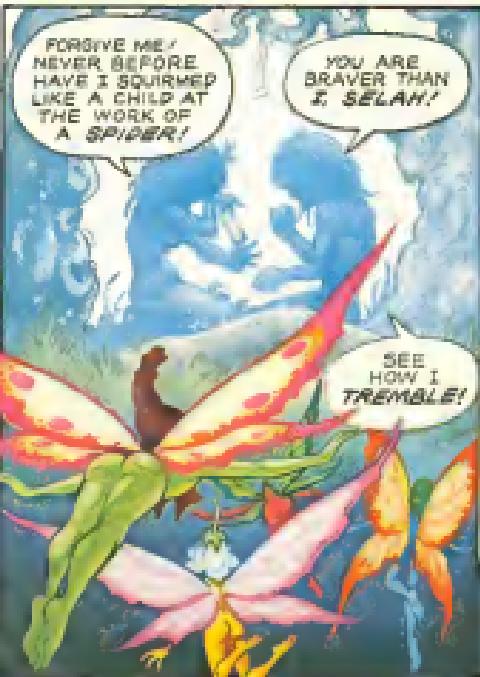
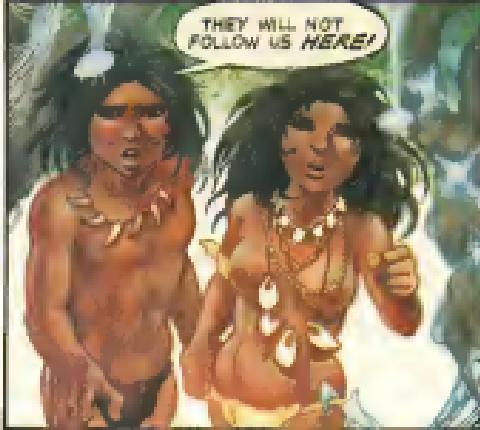
WHUZZAT?

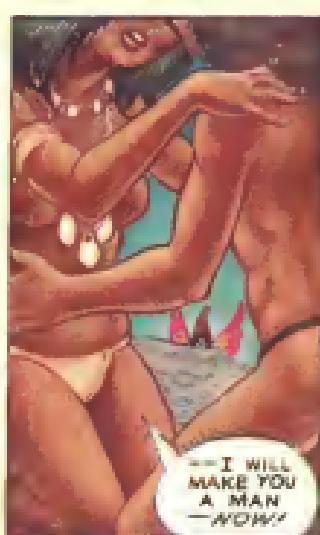
THUD THUD

(GASP!)

BIG THINGS!







## SUPPLEMENT

## OH MY FATHER'S HUNTING HORN!

HE KNOWS  
WE ARE  
HERE!

D-DO YOU  
THINK HE WILL  
BREAK FA-DO  
AND ENTER THE  
FORBIDDEN  
GROUN-D?

CLEAR THE MOUNTAINOUS  
SOUNDS THE NOTES  
THAT SIGNAL  
CORNED PREY!

100

THEIR  
TRAIL IS  
CROPPED

WE HAVE  
ONLY TO  
FOLLOW.

I WILL  
KILL ABRAHAM  
WITH MY OWN  
HANDS WHEN  
I CATCH  
HIM!

THEN LET THE  
DEMONS BEWARE  
OLBANII

I WILL  
HEAR NO  
MORE  
WARNINGS.

СВЕДЧЕНИЯ

WAIT, O LADY!  
WHAT OF THE  
DAIRYMAIDS THAT  
PWEEL HERE?

WE DARE NOT  
RISK THEIR ANGER

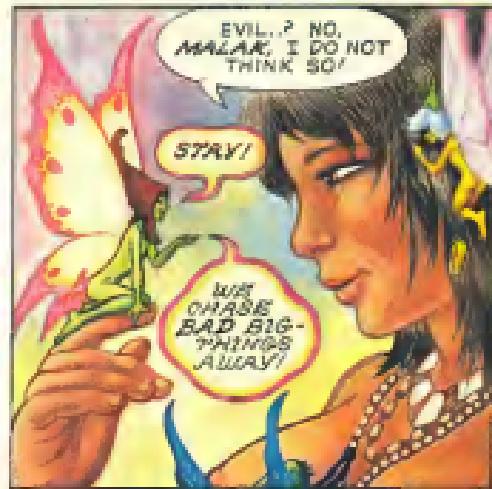
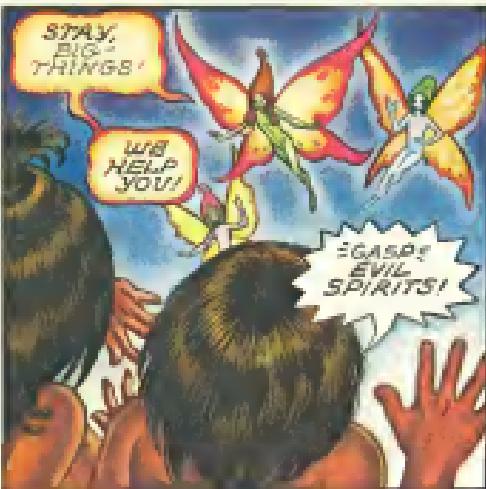
YES! ANILAK  
AND SELAH MAY  
ALREADY HAVE PAID  
FOR DISTURBING  
THEM!

100

THEY COME!  
WHAT ARE WE  
TO DO?

WE MUST RUN,  
MY LOVE, UNTIL OUR  
HEARTS BREAK!

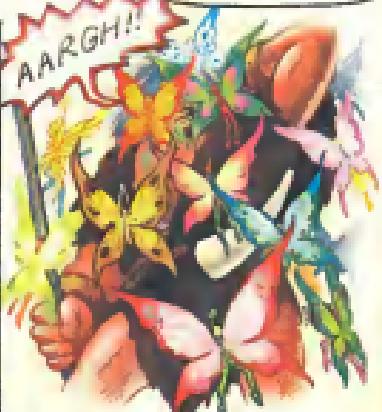
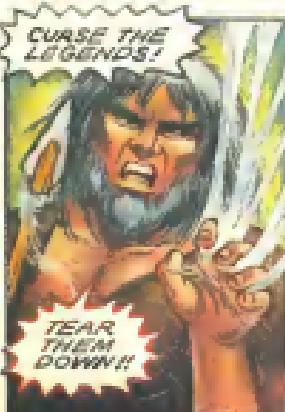
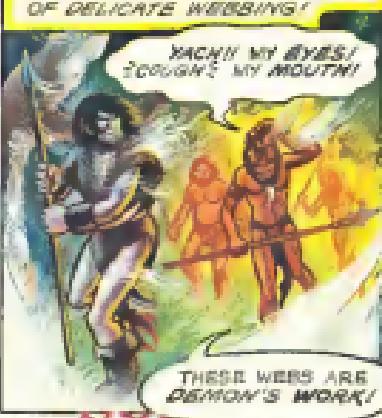
BETTER  
TO DIE IN  
"LIGHT"  
MAN TO BE  
CAUTURED  
NOW!



PETALWING GIVES A KEENING WAR CRY, AND SUDDENLY THE AIR IS FILLED WITH MANY MORE OF THE TINY, MULTI-COLORED WONDERS!



-- AS OLBAR'S PARTY PLUNGES HEADLESSLY THROUGH LABOR-IOUSLY WROUGHT STREAMERS OF DELICATE WEBBING!



INSTANTLY, DIMINUTIVE  
WINGED BEINGS  
SWARM AROUND THE  
TERRIFIED HUMANS.

AAGRFF!!

MY  
EYES!!

THE  
DEMONS  
HAVE  
BLINDED  
ME!!

CLUMSY  
SPEAKS PROPS  
USELESS AGAINST  
FOES SO SMALL  
AND SO  
SWIFT!

AT LAST EVEN OLBAR,  
THE MOUNTAINOUS  
LEARNER THAT THE OLD  
LEGENDS POSSESS, MORE  
THAN A GRAIN OF TRUTH!

N-NO!  
GO  
AWAY!!

THE BATTLE  
IS BRIEF AND  
UNEVEN, FOR  
THE HUMANS'  
OWN FEARS  
WORK AGAINST  
THEM!

LET US LIVE, O  
ANGRY SPIRITS!!

TAKE MALAK  
AND SELAH—  
AND BE DONE!!

NOISYARD  
DIGHTHINGS  
COME BACK,  
NO MORE!

WE ARE  
GRAFFUL,  
LITTLE  
SPIRITS!

NOW SELAH  
AND I CAN  
LIVE IN PEACE  
IN A PLACE  
OF OUR OWN  
CHOOSING!

AND WE WILL TELL OUR  
CHILDREN THAT THE  
LEGENDS ARE WRONG!

THE SPIRITS  
OF THIS VALLEY ARE  
NOT EVIL--

-- BUT  
GOOD AND  
HELPFUL!

ZARAH! WE SHALL SLEEP  
HERE, MY LOVE...

TOMORROW  
IS OUR NEW  
BEGINNING!

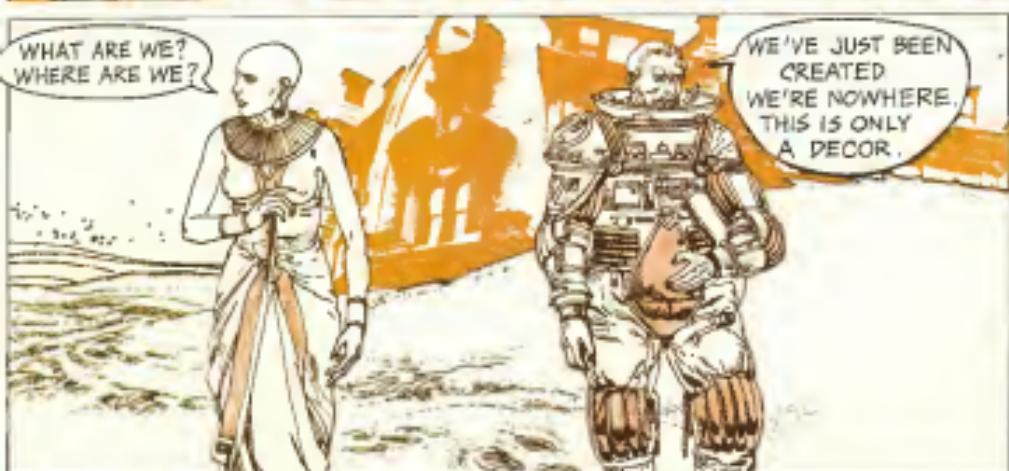
THE CALM AND GENTLE  
NIGHT GIVES WAY  
TO AMBER DAWN.

ELSEWHERE THE UNSLEEPING  
PRESERVERS TEND TO THEIR  
CUSTOMARY BUSINESS...

THEIR LONG NIGHT'S WORK IS ALREADY  
FORGOTTEN AS THE SEARCH FOR NEW  
"STILLQUIET THINGS" GOES ON...

HERE IN THE HEART OF  
THE FORBIDDEN GROVE,  
HALAK AND SELAH WILL  
SLEEP TOGETHER...  
FOR A VERY LONG TIME!

FIN





BUT WE EXIST, RIGHT?

WE MOVE...

WE DON'T DO WHAT  
WE WANT. THERE IS SOMEONE  
CREATING US MOMENT BY MOMENT.



WHAT ARE  
WE DOING  
HERE?

WE DON'T KNOW. DO YOU COME  
FROM SOMEWHERE?

NO...



I FEEL LIKE SOMEONE IS WATCHING US...  
IS USING US. IF WE ARE FIGURES ON A PAPER  
SOMEBODY MIGHT BE READING US, MIGHT BE  
GOING THROUGH OUR MOMENTS, OUR PAGES.

WHY ARE YOU DOING THAT?

I DON'T  
KNOW...  
IT DOESN'T  
MATTER  
VERY MUCH

YOU'RE FIGHTING! YOU'RE KILLING EACH OTHER!  
TRY NOT TO MOVE!

I CAN'T! I CAN'T!  
TRY TO HELP ME!



WHAT'S THE MATTER NOW?

I DON'T KNOW...  
HOLD ON...



I DON'T FEEL MYSELF MOVING  
ANYMORE.

YES. EVERYTHING  
IS ENDING



WE DID SOMETHING... FOR SOMEONE.  
WE'RE GOING TO STAY ALIVE AS LONG  
AS HE KEEPS ON WATCHING US.



I FEEL LIKE THIS IS THE END.

CAN YOU SEE  
SOMETHING?



NO, I DON'T SEE ANYTHING  
UP FRONT... DON'T BE AFRAID...  
MAYBE WE'LL BE BACK...  
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?



I DON'T KNOW  
THEY DIDN'T TELL ME



# For the next 60 seconds

by Bob Larkin

Don't touch me,  
Ralph.  
I'm sterile.

The Honeymooners  
will be back after  
these announcements.



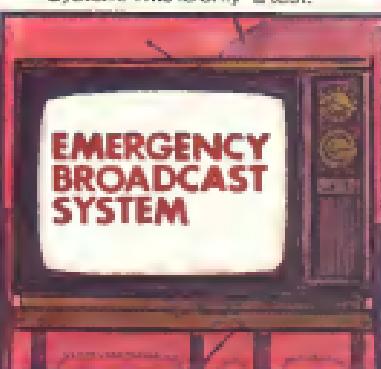
For the next sixty seconds,  
this station will conduct . . .



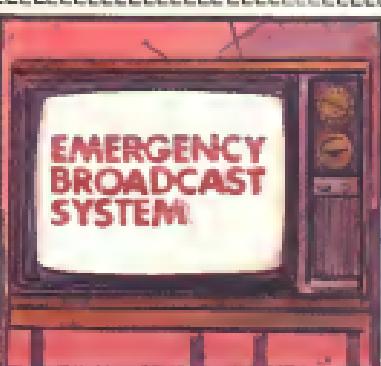
a test of the Emergency Broadcast  
System. This is only a test.



EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE



EE







This has been a test of the Emergency Broadcast System. Had it been an actual alert, you would have been instructed where to tune in your area for news and official information. This was only a test.

e

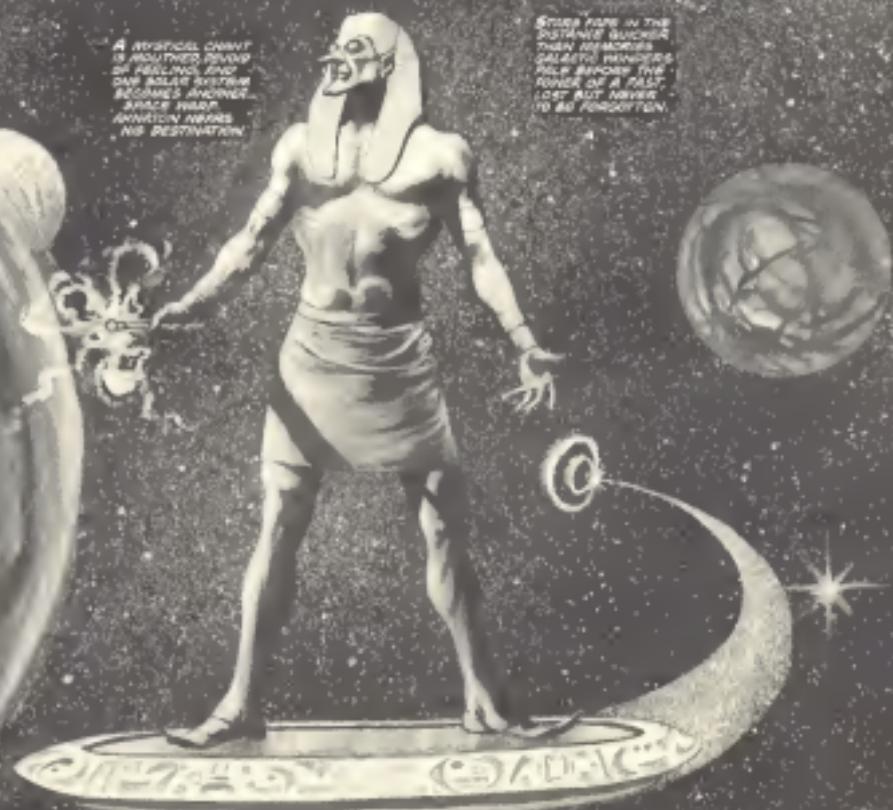
METAMORPHOSIS ODYSSEY

# PIKNATION

CHAPTER I

A MYSTICAL CHANT  
A MOURNING SONG  
OF FEELINGS AND  
DAMAGED RHYTHMS  
BECOMES ANOTHER  
SPACE WARP  
ANNEKTION INVOKES  
NO DESTINATION

STOLE MORE IN THE  
DUSTY HABITS  
CALLED MEMORIES  
PULL BACKUP THE  
ROUNDS OF A PAIN  
LOST BUT ANSWER  
TO BE FORGOTTEN



THE ANNEKTION INVOKES NO DESTINATION, BUT SINGS HAD TO HIS  
ACCOMPLISHMENTS, HIS VISIONS AND PLANNINGS, HIS SENSES ONLY PRECISE.

HE REMEMBERS OSHKOSH AS A PLACE OF SENSITIVE MARVEL, ANCIENT GRANDEUR, NATURAL BEAUTY, AND MYSTICAL SPIRIT AND WONDER. PERHAPS HIS MEMORIES ARE SLIGHTLY TINTED, BUT THIS IS TO THE PERSONALITY, FOR OSHKOSH WAS HIS HOME.

His heart  
filled with the  
sensations of  
perfection, now  
seems faint on  
the threshold  
that awaits  
them forever.

His eyes clouded  
at the memory  
of one who was soft  
inside, and whose  
name is now  
known.



THESE WARS OF THE PAST, WHILE THEY ENDURE, GENTLY SOOTHE HIS THROBBING SOUL. THEY ARE PAIN-  
FILLED, BUT IT HELPS THAT THEY SHINE HERE.

THEY ARE AIMED IN DEALING WITH  
THE EGOIC SHADOWS OF IN-  
FAUTH. THEY ALIGN THE SEPARATE  
PAIRS OF HIS LOSS AND COMFORT, THE  
HARVEST WHICH TURNS WITH HIM.

THE BEAUTY FLOWS AND THE  
ANGER BECOMES OSHKOSHIAN  
SHAKES EQUIPMENTS WITH A  
DEMON OF DIVERS, AND ONLY THE  
HARVEST ETERNALLY RELEASYS.



FROM INNERS THEY CAME REARING  
BY DRAUGS, BORN SAY THEY HAD  
FROM THE SECOND FATER OF THE  
PLANETS. OTHERS CLAIM THEY  
ARE CLOTHES OF THE FATHER  
SPLIT FROM DOWN AND UPWARD  
SOME MORE USE SAY THEY CAN  
ONLY BY DEPART FROM HELL.

THE SHARPER LITTLE  
MARTIERS, FOR TO  
THE FATE'S SWELL  
UPON YOU, TO MEET  
THE INNERSHIPS IS  
TO GREAT FURY  
DEPTH.

THOSE UNFORTUNATE ENOUGH TO SURVIVE DISASTER LEARN A  
NEW SWING.

THE LIVING FIND THEMSELVES INCLINED  
INTO SPECIAL CONSTITUTIONS CHANTED  
BY THE FROTHMEN'S GALLANT THROATS.

THREE, LIFE  
DISAPPEARS AROUND  
THEIR EYES—  
—BUT THEIR BONES LIVE ON TO FORGE AN UNQUESTIONNING  
ARMY OF SLAVES.

THE HUMBLEST PLANET ITSELF BECOMES THE INNERSHIPS  
NEXT VICTIM.

WITH INNATE  
PATIENCE, THE  
ENDURANCE  
BORN MANY  
EVERY FRIEND  
CAN TEST  
THE QUALITY OF  
THE HUMBLEST  
FOLKLES.

NOTWITHSTANDING  
THEIR INNATE  
TENACITY,  
LADS FIGHT  
COMPLACENT AND  
THEY MOVE ON.

BECUSE ALL EYOTEEAN  
SAILORS ARE BORN PRO  
TE TO LEAL AND AWAKEN  
ING, THEY ARE RE  
MOVED WITH GREAT  
FREEDOM WHEN THEIR  
UNAWARENESS ENDS.



ON ANDROUS THIS DRAK TRAILER  
WAS REBUILT ON VEN BANDERS  
MANYEES OF TIMES.

BUT FOR SOME REAS  
SON THE DESTROY  
IS NEVER REALLY  
APPRECIATED.



THE PROUD AND POWERFUL DRAKSHAND WATCHED  
IN HORROR AS ONE WORLD AFTER ANOTHER FELL  
AHEAD THE TRIANGLE EYOTEEAN WAR MACHINE.



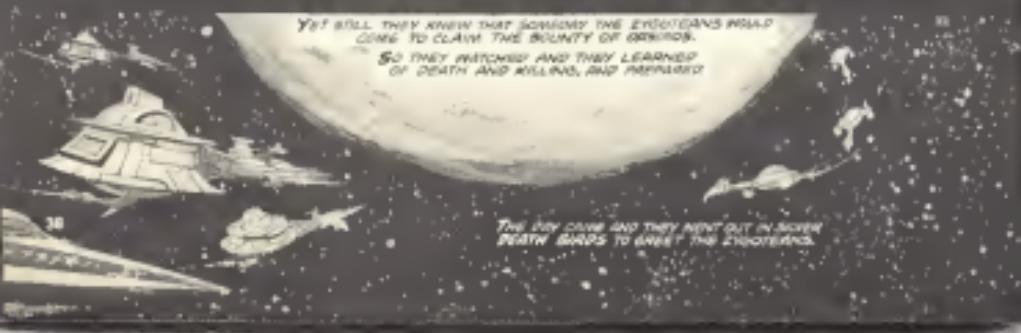
HUNDREDS OF TIMES THEY PATCHED AND HOPE BUT NEVER DID THEY ACT.



FOR WAR WAS A STATE THEY  
HAD SOMEHOW NEVER BEEN  
PLACED IN, EVEN THOUGH  
PRAYER HAD ALWAYS BEEN ONE  
OF THEIR GODS.

THIS MAY HAVE BEEN BECAUSE  
DESPITE THE FACT THAT GENDERS  
WERE BUT HOURS TO THEM, THE  
DRAKSHANDS STILL FEARED DEATH.

YET STILL THEY KNEW THAT SOONLY THE EYOTEEANS WOULD  
COME TO CLAIM THE BOUNTY OF GENDERS.  
SO THEY PATCHED AND THEY LEARNED  
OF DEATH AND KILLING, AND PREPARED.



THE DAY CAME AND THEY WENT OUT IN SWOON  
DEATH SHIPS TO BANE THE EYOTEEANS.

THE BATTLE OF ORION'S END HAD BEEN FIGHTING NEARLY 500 HOURS. NUMEROUS CRASH LANDINGS HAD BEEN REPORTED BUT THIS ORIONIAN AREA...

LONG HOURS OF CHAOS -  
FULLY OBSERVING ANASTRIAN  
ARMED FORCES HAD SIGHTED THE  
ORIONIAN FLEET. THEY  
WERE CONVINCED OF  
A MASSIVE ASSAULT.

BUT THEY DID NOT  
ALLOW VICTORY TO  
BLIND THEM TO  
REALITY.

THE SLEEKED ORIONIAN  
REALIZED THAT THEIR SET-  
TLEMENTS WERE IN DANGER.  
BUT HE WAS A FLEET. THEIR  
VICTORY WAS THE RESULT OF  
DOZENS OF UNARMED  
ZANTHAN SURVIVORS.

ALL KNEW THE  
FIGHT WOULD  
NOT TURN SOFTLY.  
PREPARED TO  
FIGHT MIGHTILY  
WITH ANY RESIS-  
TANCE THEY MIGHT  
ENCOUNTER ON  
THAT DAY...



A **numerous** new **strategies** **include** **conservative** **and** **bold** **to** **the** **extreme**, **a** **thorough** **new** **post**  
**part** **business** **model** **research** **and** **plan** **up** **to** **the** **end**.

AT LAST" BECOME AN ACCEPTED PART OF THEIR FUTURE AND A MAJOR PART OF THEIR PLANS.

Our thanks  
and appreciation  
to the many  
members of the  
entertainment



EVERY HOME GETS  
ADDITIONAL PROTEC-  
TION FROM THE  
HOMESTEAD  
PROPERTY TAX.  
TAXES ARE BILLED  
FROM DATA FROM  
TO TAXES.



... **CONFIDENTIAL**  
DISCUSSION AUTHORIZED  
ONLY BY SUPER-  
VISOR, DIRECTOR,  
OR CHIEF POLICEMAN  
DURING ACTUAL PERIOD  
OF INVESTIGATION.  
DISCUSSION NOT AUTH-  
ORIZED OUTSIDE  
INVESTIGATIVE PERIOD  
BUT MAY BE MADE  
TO SUPERVISOR, DIRECTOR,  
OR CHIEF POLICEMAN  
FOR INFORMATION.



2004. CHINE LOHSE,  
THEIR HOUSE BURNED,  
NOVEMBER 1900. STYLIZED  
PICTURE IN THE PAPER.  
2005. SAVING AND  
INVESTMENT ASSOCIATION  
PICTURE OF THE  
ASSOCIATION A FIVE-  
YEAR MEMORIAL CELEB-  
RATING 1900. THE  
CELEBRATION WAS PRE-  
PARED WITH GREAT  
CARE AND GREAT  
COSTLY PREPARATION.



Mr. Fred Fawcett  
of London, who  
has authority over  
the management of  
the shareholders,  
has also recently  
of London, that  
he had no illus-  
trations of his  
share in the  
firm.

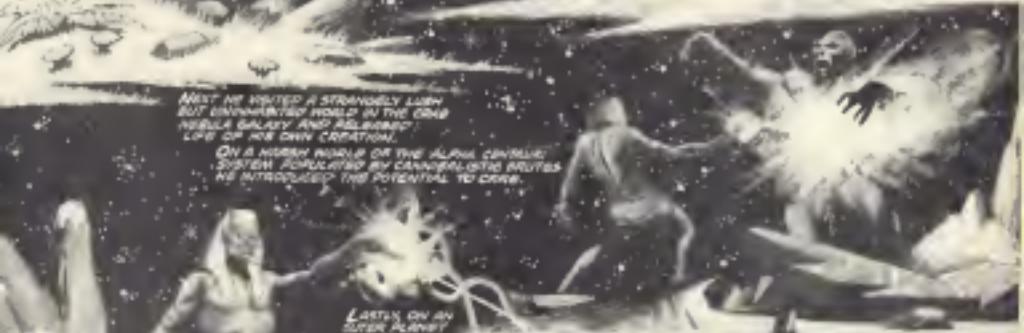


ANSWER PROBLEMS  
FOR PRACTICE. 100  
QUESTIONS FOR  
IMPROVEMENT.





AN INHABITED TO THIS THREE PLANETS OF  
PRIMITIVE HUMANS. THEY WERE SO  
HUNGRY AND ANGRY THAT THEY WOULD  
WALK AND BURN ALL THE BACON DOWN  
INTO THE CRIMINALS OF THE ENTHRONED  
HOMO SAPIENS THOSE.



ANOTHER HAD A STRANGELY LIGHT  
BUT ANGRY BUT HAD TO THE CRIM  
NEBULA GALAXY AND REBELLION  
LIFE OF HIS OWN CIVILIZATION.

ON A HUMAN PLANET OF THE ALPH CAPRICORN  
SYSTEM POPULATED BY CANNIBALISTIC BRUTES  
WE INTRODUCED THE POTENTIAL TO DRAW.



LASTLY, ON AN  
OTHER PLANET  
OF VEGA, HE  
LEFT A WORLD  
OF HIS FATHER,  
MONSTER TELL  
HUMANOID CRIES  
WOULD COME  
TO CURE IT.



AND CLEVER  
PULLED FOR  
THE BAND.



ANOTHER DOING  
ALL THIS, HE  
RETURNED TO  
GARDEN...

THE END NEARLY TOOK 100,000 YEARS TO REACH.

IT'S COMING, RIGHT  
MANY FAMILIES  
WILL BE DESTROYED.



...SOME ARE MORE AGGRESSIVE  
THAN OTHERS.



BUT AT LAST, HE  
STOPPED LOOKING  
FOR REVENGE  
AND, INSTEAD, LOOKED  
FOR THE MEANING  
OF HIS PROGRAMMING.



...BUT AT THE LAST MOMENT  
HE TURNED AND PRESENDED  
THE INHOSPITABLE FORCES  
OF ZYDOTE TO RIP HIS  
PLANET APART.



THE ANGEL ONCE AGAIN  
SAVED ITSELF, DRAWD IN  
TO HIS SHELL...



HE TRIED TO  
CATCH HIM BACK  
IN HIS SWYING  
WORLD, FOR HE  
KNEW INSTANT  
HE WAS COMING.



...AND HE SHATTERED  
INTO THE ANCIENT PATH  
THROUGH WHICH HIS  
INDEPENDENCE CAME  
TO HIM.

# LU<sup>L</sup> L<sup>E</sup> B<sup>Y</sup> E OF BEDLAM

NEW EDITION

CAN YOU HEAR  
ME, BABY?

BABY, THERE IS  
NOTHING TO FEAR...

WE ONLY WANT TO  
HELP YOU, BABY!

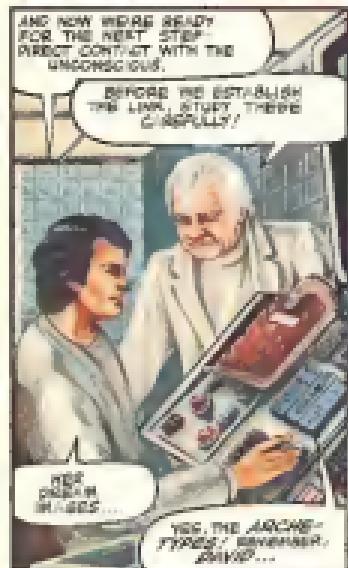
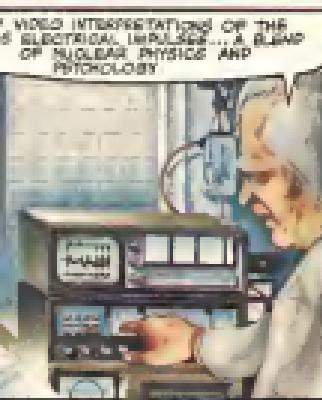
TELL YOURSELF THAT IT'S  
ONLY A DREAM!



IT'S NO USE -- SHE CAN'T  
HEAR US! I'M AFRAID HER  
CONDITION IS CRITICAL.

IT'SH AMAZING ME,  
TO THINK WE'RE ACTUALLY  
HELD HER DREAMS!

ADOLPH VIDEO INTERPRETATIONS OF THE  
BRAIN'S ELECTRICAL IMPULSES, A BLEND  
OF NUCLEAR PHYSICS AND  
PSYCHOLOGY.



NURSE. GIVE DR. WALLACE THE  
INJECTION. TEN...NINE...EIGHT...  
SEVEN...



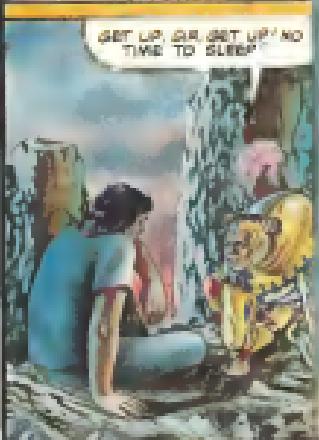
SIX...FIVE...  
FOUR...



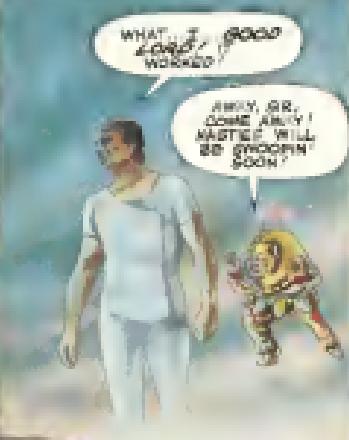
...THREE...TWO...  
ONE!



GET UP, DR. GET UP! NO  
TIME TO SLEEP!



WHAT <sup>IS</sup> GOOD  
WORKED?



LISTEN, THERE'S NOTHING  
TO FEAR -- I'M HERE  
TO HELP!



NO, FACE THEM!  
THEY ONLY LIVE IN  
YOUR OWN MIND.  
THEY'RE ILLUSIONS,  
CRAZIES! THEY...



QUICKLY, BOB! THIS WAY! OVER THE BRIDGE!

RUN!

THE ANCIENT  
GATES AND  
STATUE...

AS THE ANCIENT  
ROSES STRAIN...  
AND BREAK!

FOLLOW ME,  
GENTLEMAN. AUGUSTINE  
IS WAITING.

LET A VERY  
STRANGE EMBASSY

AFTER A LONG AND ARDUOUS  
JOURNEY, WALTER AND CAROLINE  
FINALLY REACH THE JOURNEY,  
WHERE THEY ARE WAITING...

METHINK THE  
GOD WANTS US  
TO FOLLOW  
SIR!

PAUL AT THE LAIR...

I DONT LIKE  
THIS! THE BEADS  
HERE SEEM WEIRD  
IN BEAUTIFUL  
PARADISE!

THE GUARD CANDY HERE...

GUARDIAN,  
WHAT IS  
THIS  
PLACE?

HELLO BOY!  
IT MUST BE A  
FOLLY PARADISE!

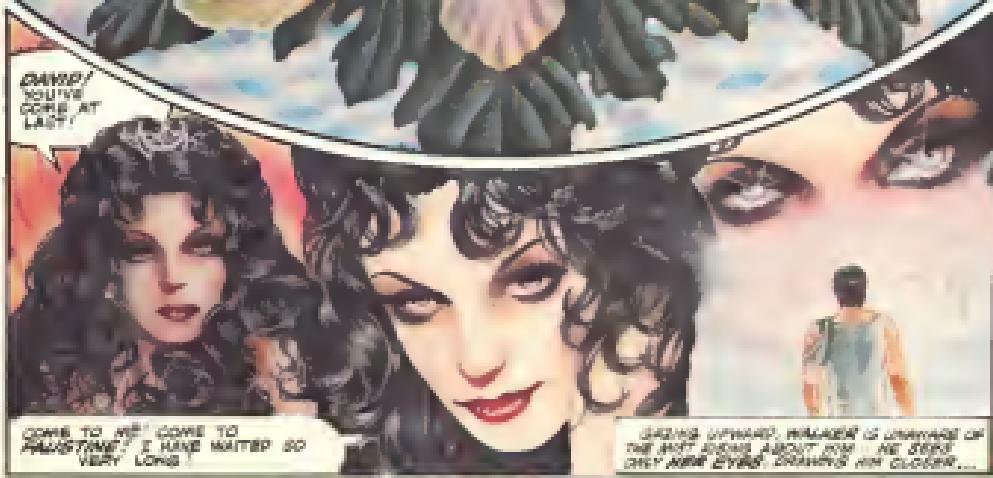




DADDY,  
YOU'VE  
COME AT  
LAST!

COME TO ME! COME TO  
MAMOSTANE! I HAVE WAITED SO  
VERY LONG!

...GIVING UPWARD, MAMAGER IS UNAWARE OF  
THE MIST FORMS AROUND HIM. HE SEEKS  
DARK HABIT EVER DRAWS HIS GLANCE...



YOU KNOW THAT YOU WANT  
ME! WHY DO YOU  
HESITATE?

THROUGH THE CLEARING  
PORT, WALKED TO TANIA,  
ARMED TO FAUSTINE'S  
ENCHANTED DOMAIN!

I... I CAME HERE... TO  
HELP SOMEONE... A GIRL...

FORGET HER! FORGET  
EVERYTHING BUT ME!

WALKER HAS FALLEN  
INTO A TRAP! THE LOVE  
HE FEELS IS FOR  
HIMSELF...

HIS ANIMAL! THE FEMALE  
WITHIN HIM -- SHELL TRY  
TO KEEP HIM FOREVER!

HIMSELF?

CANT WE  
BRING HIM  
OUT OF IT?

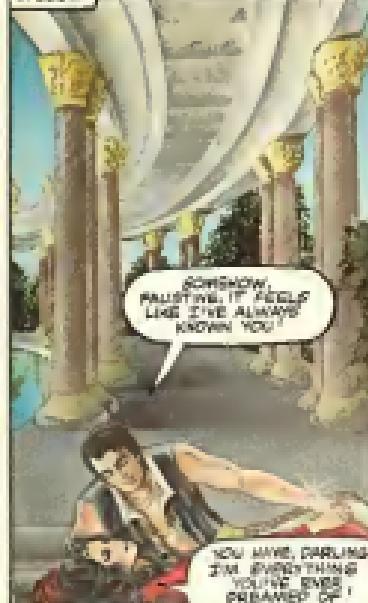
NOT! THE SHOCK  
WORLD KILL  
HIM! WE CAN  
ONLY HOPE!

BUT WHICHER GAMES IN  
MOLLINIST AS THE TEMPTRESS, FAUSTINE,  
MEASURES HER NEED OF ENCHANTMENT!

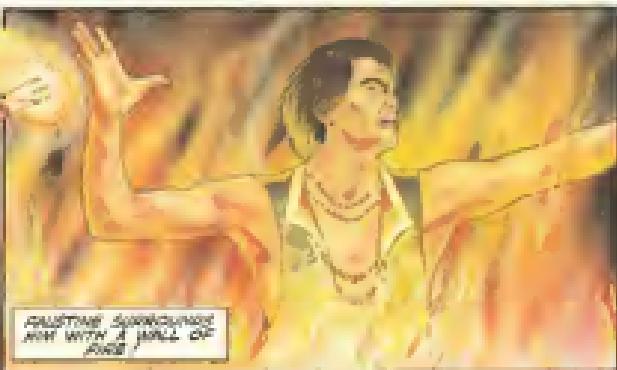
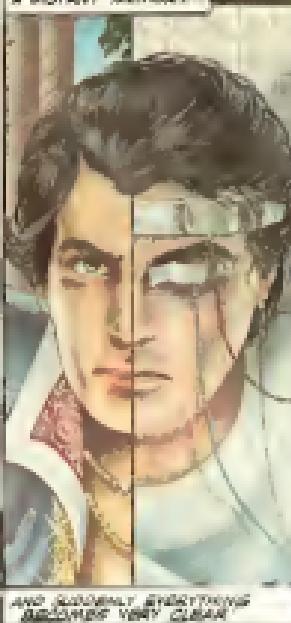
(GEGH!) OH,  
DR. ADLER,  
ISN'T IT  
ROMANTIC?



DARLON TURN INTO WINE AS DAVID SINKS  
INTO THE SPLASHES OF PAULINE'S  
SPELL...



SOMMOM'S REPLY SPARKS A DISTANT MEMORY...



DR. ADLER IS QUICK TO REACT. GRABBING A GLASS OF WATER, HE DASHES IT ON WALKER'S FACE!



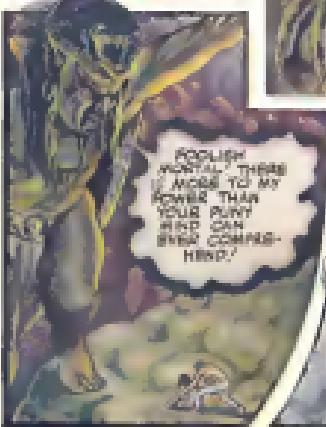
WITHOUT WARNING, ROSE WAVES CRASH IN TO GUEON THE FLAMES!



THE WAVES CLEVER SWIMMED FAR AWAY FROM THE LAND OF HIS DREAMS, INTO THE DEPTHS OF A MAD  
SEA, WHERE THE WATERS WERE AS DARK AS NIGHT.



ENTERING THE DEMON'S LAIR, DR. WALKER SPOTS A FAMILIAR FORM, CROUCHED IN A CORNER...



"BEHOLD THAT WHICH IS GREATER THAN YOURSELF! BEHOLD EVIL IN ALL OF ITS MANY FORMS!" DANO AND SHYLY FLEW IN TERROR AS THARANAS ASSUMED AN EVEN MORE HIDEOUS SHAPE!"



"EMILY, LISTEN! THIS IS NOTHING BUT A DREAM—AND YOU CAN END IT IF YOU TRY!"



"YOU CAN WAKE UP AND LIVE, OR DIE IN THIS HELL! THE CHOICE IS YOURS!"

"I... I WANT TO LIVE... I WANT TO LIVE!"

"EMILY'S Sudden RUSH OF STRENGTH REACHES THE GROWING CHAMBER, TRANSFORMING BOTH...

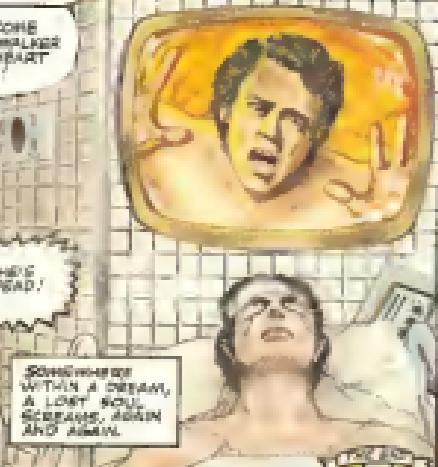


...INTO AN ANGEL HOLDING THE SWORD OF TRUTH.



IT IS DONE, DOCTOR.  
FINALLY LET US SHAKE OFF  
THIS SLEEP OF DREAMS.

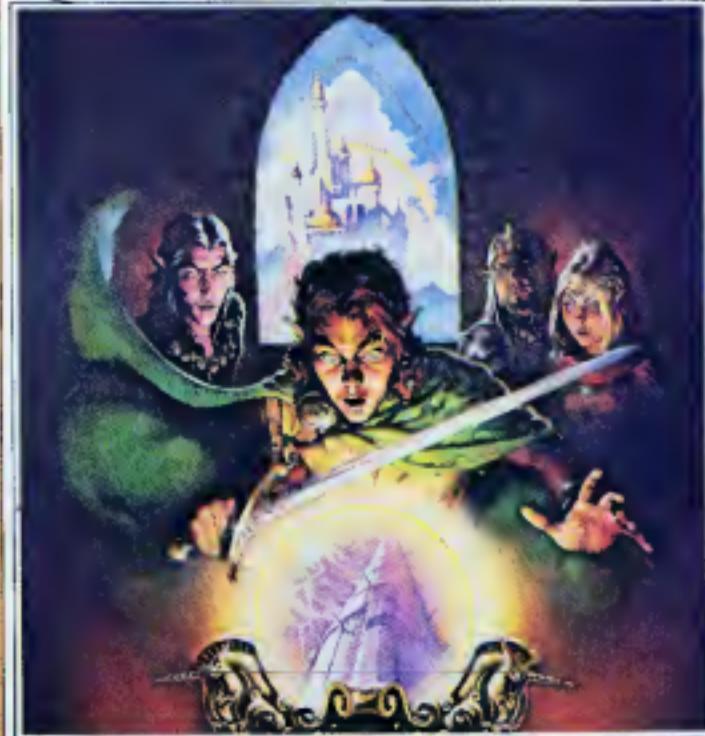
AND NO MORE FANTOM LAND  
TO ABEST, EASY WALKER  
FANTOMS.



Once upon a time, a fantasy or adventure novel was more than just a good read. It was a total visual experience featuring the best in typography, design, and illuminated chapter headings, plus an abundance of color and black and white illustrations by the likes of N.C. Wyeth and Howard Pyle. Sadly, with the paper shortages of World War II, this type of book had all but disappeared. Recently however, the illustrated fantasy novel has made a resurgence, particularly among large format, lavishly produced paperbacks. Next month, Aerial Books, one of the forerunners in this resurgence, is releasing an ambitious new addition to the field, part one of a projected trilogy, illuminated with nine full-color paintings and over sixty black and white illustrations. We're happy to be bringing you a special preview excerpt. What made us happy can be found on this and following pages.

# ELFSPIRE

by John Pocsik & Illustrated by Thomas Blackshear



Clambering into the castle courtyard, the wizard Luso, and a fearful Sheriff Squat, reined in their exhausted steeds near the towering statue of a stone dragon.

Squat jumped at the sight. His heart was pounding madly at these sinister surroundings.

But even more in fear of those he knew were following close behind. He clutched his sword tightly as he peered into the shadows clustering under the gloomy arches, while the wizard climbed down from his saddle with the Book of Life. That blue shimmer still envel-

oped the wizard like a fine mist. Squat felt its menace and stayed well away. There would be no approaching Luso from behind with a dagger now and the mid elf could see that the wizard was steadily regaining his powers, growing younger and less hunched as each mo-

ment paused. He was feeding off the magic stored within these dark walls.

All of my plans are falling apart, the sheriff thought, looking around desperately. If he could only flee with perhaps just a little treasure—but the thought of encountering a vengeful Prince of Thieves in the muttering darkness made that impossible. And to where, in all this wild land of rock and fire, could he flee?

Squat glanced toward the gate, leading back down the Road. Still no sign of their pursuers. Oh, that Lord Fain has somehow managed to kill the Prince of Thieves, he fervently prayed.

The wizard stalked across the courtyard, his ragged robes sweeping the dead leaves upon the flagstones. The wind stirred his white hair, blowing it back so that the black band now sank so deep into his neck was exposed. But Luq no longer felt the pain there, or in his maimed hand, ensnared as he was with the use of his reacquired magic. Constant thunder rumbled in the distance, he saw the turrets of his castle starkly outlined against the flares of lightning. The wizard glanced at the mid-air stumbling along behind him. His eyes flamed with anger and contempt. "Lord Fain is dead!" he snarled. "I felt his hand shatter! He has found the release he so desired—and the fool has at least bought me time. Now the Light itself is intervening on Glasshane's side. That I did not expect. Yet I can still prevail if I can summon the Daenorion Lords from Marthana."

Ignoring the fat sheriff, the wizard hurried up the ornate steps toward the studded metal door. The wood creaked his good hand and made the Sign of the Crescent. "By the hidden name of your master, open door to me!"

The door swung inward with barely a metallic whisper. Luq turned toward the Dragon in the courtyard.

Guardian of the Gate,

Long frozen in stone—

Feel the fire flow—

Reborn, flesh and bone.

A deafening roar split the gloom. Squat heard a loud hiss

sing, as of a million swords being drawn at the same time, he whirled and cried out in terror, for the giant statue was moving. It was coming to life! The sheriff cringed back from its battle, crimson eyes, still not believing what he was seeing. Luq had conjured up a living dragon from dead stone! Puffs of black smoke drifted from its platterized nostrils. The dim glow of sunset seeping through rifts in the storm clouds, struck rainbow glints and sheens off the beast's jewel-like scales. Its great wings beat ever faster as it hopped forward, struggling for balance, never taking its heavy eyes off the wizard. The gar-gantuan jaws swung open to expose dripping fangs, far down in its smoky maw the sheriff thought he saw flames flickering.

The wizard pointed east. "Enemies come, my faithful pet. See to it now they are fatefully met."

More black smoke belched forth as the dragon's head bobbed up and down. Its wings began to beat faster and faster, raising clouds of dust. Suddenly it took off, ascending sharply, soaring gracefully up. It sailed over the wall in the blink of an eye and was lost in the burning clouds overhead.

Without waiting, Luq rushed into the darkness of his castle. The fat elf followed, bickering fearfully through the entrance. The door narrowly missed him as it swung shut with a brazen clang.

"Light!" shouted the wizard in a ringing voice. Instantly the torches lining the corridor flared into brightness. The air was close and warm and smelled of oiled heated metal. Staring at those black walls, Squat could detect neither bolt nor seam nor seal. Luq swept on down the corridor, throwing off his ragged cloak and dusty armor with a crash. His tread was swift—indeed, he was almost running with his precious burden.

The two elves entered an immense high-domed hall, in the center of which was a circular table to black gleaming wood, all of one piece, upon it there was a setting of gold plate, crystal chalice, and softly glowing tapers, as if the wizard

had been expecting for a meal. Luq turned. The fierce expression upon his master face made Squat fall back. "What here?" his wince echoed and whispered through the dragon chamber. "My dragon will deal with those who would dare enter uninvited. But should they be so fortunate as to win past that beast, they will find that Castle Luq is filled with many tricks and traps and deadly rooms for the unwanted provider. And if they should we past them," he said softly, his eyes boring into the mid elf's, "then I know that you good sheriff Squat, will slay them for me—if you value your life!"

Luq turned to leave, but the sheriff suddenly grabbed at his robe and spun the tall elf around.

"You're not leaving me here to face the Prince of Thieves alone, wizard!" he spat. "I'm not going to fight your battles while you're busy making off with your magical hoard! The Book you're holding is worth the city's ransom. I think I had best stay with you, mage. Lord Fain left your side, which proved most unfortunate for him. I am Squat and I am not so easily won."

There was a sharp crack, a flash of blinding light. Squat was hurled across the chamber to crash against the wall, down which he slid, pieces of his dented armor falling around him.

"How dare you lay a hand on the wizard Luq! You have no place at all within these walls, sheriff. It is only at my sufferance that you continue to breathe. You followed me here, thinking I would lead you to treasure—that great shimmering goal of your entire greedy ride, which blinds all elves." He held up the Book of Life. "This is my treasure, the key which will give me the ultimate powers, the key which will make me master over Ellendain and Fainland and all the realms between. Do not touch me again, not—or leave this hall—or I will not be so merciful! My traps can kill a sheriff as well as a thief!"

With that the wizard vanished behind a visible hanging.

Sheriff Squat gave a weak curse but his eyes glowed like

coals of red fury in the darkness. He would waste no further time! He would find Luq, shove a dagger between those bony shoulders and take the Book of Life—along with whatever other magic baubles he might chance upon (including that wondrous scything crystal). Then he would steal away as quickly and as secretly as possible, away from this pole of sorcery and shadow.

As he stumbled toward the hanging, he glanced back down the corridor at the great arched entrance. He shivered, hoping it would be strong enough to keep the Prince of Thieves out. He wondered how close the thief was now, but it really did not matter. Not even Saltymymer could fight a dragon like that, single-handed and expect to wind up anything other than cinder.

Sheriff Squat limped on into the darkness, searching for his forte.

\* \* \* \* \*

Riding as though goblins were chasing at their heels, Glasshane and Saltymymer thundered across the bridge spanning the chasm known as Roaring Gorge.

A fine man filled the air, silencing their hair, their flying cloaks and their armor. Upstream a column of foaming water jetted from an opening in the gray cliff, falling hundreds of feet to smash against the polished rocks below.

Then the two elves were safely across and racing up into the crags along the winding road. The sky turned black and angry clouds came surging out of the heights toward them. The peaks now hid Castle Luq, draped their veils. Glasshane turned his head up, shouting against the wind. "We must hurry! Luq is in his castle by now, but he will still need time to prepare the Mirror of Levels by which he means to call the Daenorion Lords. I can feel my strength and magic powers rising, thanks to Tishalith and the Brotherhood of the Light. They are very close. I am ready for my duel with the wizard."

Saltymymer spurred his mount until he was racing neck and neck with the elf lord.

He wished that he had his Cloak of Color with him now—



now, when he really needed it, he had thrown off all his packs when they set out in pursuit of the two elves.

The high elf glanced at the thief sharply. His eyes blazed. "Sairhymer! I know what you are thinking, but first and at any cost we must prevent Luq from giving the secret of release to the Damnon Lords. They must not regain that knowledge. That means the wizard will probably have to die, he will remain a menace to us all if one of us fails, the other must find the wizard and slay him with the enchanted blade before Luq can complete his spell. He must not live to give them the Book of Life!"

"He will live long enough," the thief shouted back.

"Sairhymer! You are bound by oath! Swear to me you will do exactly as I say, or you will not enter that castle with me. You will not jeopardize Elland!"

"I swear!" the low elf yelled bitterly into the wind. "I swear Luq will not live to endanger the elven!"

They galloped up the last curving incline and through a gate then the castle was suddenly before them, as if it had leaped out of the growing darkness to bar their way. They rode slowly into a wide courtyard in front of the main pile of the wizard's abode.

They leaped down upon the flagstones.

The high elf opened his pouch and sprinkled the last remnants of the elvenwine over both of their blades. "This is all of it. Now we have to succeed."

A shill had shattered the silence. A shadow swept over the courtyard out of the clouds. They had to shield their eyes against a sudden flare of brilliant yellow light. Beating and bucking, their mounts bolted, racing around the courtyard before finally plunging through the gate. Both elves heard a distant scream over their heads, and the drum of leathery wings.

"A dragon! Luq has set a dragon upon us!" Glasthane shouted as he leaped for the steps. A shaft of flame shot out of the sky, licking at their heels. Sairhymer crouched behind the base of one of the

demon statues. His small heart pounded in wonder, for he had never seen a dragon before!

The dragon screamed in rage as it dove toward the intruders again, its wings outspread like vanes. Smoke belched from its nostrils. Its great claws were flexed to tear into its victim. Those terrible jaws opened wide and a column of yellow and orange fire lit up the gloom as it hurtled down toward the frightened elves. They ducked behind an iron statue, which began to glow cherry red. Waves of heat beat at them. The dragon swept up for another pass.

Glasthane sheathed his sword, mounted to the soj of the stairs in front of the door, and closed his eyes in concent-

ration who jumped down the steps. Kneeling by the pedestal, readying himself to face the final attack, Sairhymer saw a shadow stir in the heart of the fire. His mouth fell open—

Lord Glasthane came striding forward! His garments were not even singed by the flames. But his slanted eyes were glowing with a bright intensity that matched the dragon's fire.

The flame cut off abruptly. The dragon screeched as it mounted into the upper air, beating at the lightning and the clouds. Again golden fire poured down upon the elf lord, enveloping him, again he walked toward unheeded.

Glasthane's lips began to move silently. The great crea-

ture who jumped down the steps. Kneeling by the pedestal, readying himself to face the final attack, Sairhymer saw a shadow stir in the heart of the fire. His mouth fell open—

The stone dragon landed in the courtyard with a deafening crash. The air was filled with rock chips and grey fragments. The smell of ancient dust filled the air.

All that was left of Luq's guardian was a pile of rubble lying in the middle of the courtyard. Something glimmered within the mound's heart, dimmed and went out.

Glasthane came striding down the steps and helped the dazed elf to his feet. "That beast must have been more than a thousand years old, for there are not any like it alive in Elland today. Luq must have captured the dragon long ago and kept it imprisoned in stone until such time as he would need it against invaders. His sorcery is strong, but so is my magic, for it comes from the Light. Quickly now—let us enter, and be wary for traps!"

At the top of the steps, Glasthane unsheathed the amulet portal with the hilt of his grey elven sword.

Circle of darkness,  
portal of night,  
Open before me in the  
name of the Light!

The metal began to glow with heat. A sudden wind swirled up, as if the door were trying to suck air to remain cool. It turned from dull red to bright cherry to fiery orange.

Glasthane was trembling from the effort of maintaining his spell.

The door shuddered and suddenly collapsed inward in a rain of fiery shards and fragments.

They ran up the steps and leaped through the opening, avoiding the dripping metal.

"Are you all right?" asked the Prince of Thieves.

"Do not worry about me!" Glasthane gasped. "There is always a price to pay when such magic is used, but it is the only way to defeat Luq's enchantments. The Light is still with us! The Shaper grant we are not too late! Hurry! It is getting dark outside, and the stars will soon be in place. Hurry!"

The two elves raced on into the shadowy corridor of this somber palace, that abode of evil, Castle Luq.



mission. Sweat began to pour down his gaunt pale face. The dragon returned, settling lower and lower, beating and buffeting the elves with the blades of its wings. Its head darted at the elf lord like an adder striking. Uttering a cry, Sairhymer smote at the beast's neck, but his slender rapier only slid along the armored scales. The dragon's mouth opened—and the high elf disappeared in a sheet of flame!

"Glasthane!" Sairhymer screamed. His heart stopped, for no elf could have survived that blast.

The dragon's wings creased as it lifted higher, continuing its lethal climb, closing silently down upon the threshold. The flames licked toward the small

tree hanging in the sky above them jerked, it beat in agony. Its skin started to change color. The batwings beat frantically at the air as the beast struggled to stay aloft, flapping ever more stiffly as the living flesh turned back into stone under the high elf's spell. Sairhymer could not believe what he was seeing. Glasthane was drenched in sweat from the tremendous effort.

The dragon tried to make one last strike. By now hundreds of tiny cracks had formed, spreading and running together along its entire body.

Then its stony neck suddenly snapped off and the monster came tumbling out of the sky toward them, its shadow grow-

# THE FANTASIES OF MIRKO ILIĆ

He's a talented young Yugoslavian cartoonist. Over these next three pages and in future issues, you can experience his unique, darkly humored, one page fantasies. Graphic. Surreal. Disturbing. For unlike many fantasies, his are about reality.

## HISTORY OF HUMAN ABSURDITY

by Mirko Ilić • Part 1

DRAG  
HOLD UP A  
SECOND



SEE  
THAT HOLE  
THE BULLET  
PUNCTURED

MAKES A PERFECT  
LOOKOUT SPOT. IT'S  
A THOUSAND TO ONE  
ANOTHER  
ROUND WILL  
BE THERE.  
NEE TO  
KNOW?



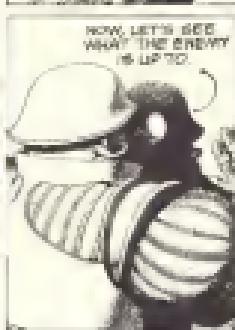
THEIR



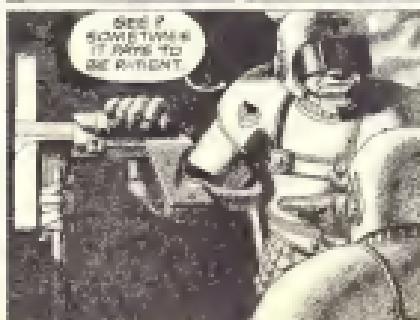
WHEN ONLY  
YOUR HEAD IS  
UNPROTECTED



NOW, LET'S SEE  
WHAT THE BREW  
IS UP TO.



SEE?  
SOMETIMES  
IT PAYS TO  
BE PATIENT



GOT A THOUSAND TO  
ONE CHANCE OF A HIT.  
WHEN THE HOLE PUNCTURES  
YOU SOME CONSIDERATION.  
IT'S A THOUSAND TO ONE  
NO BULLET WILL EVER  
HIT THERE AGAIN.



# THE VICTOR



# SHAKTI



there was a distinctly beautiful  
and strong horse.



who  
undeniably stood in one place.



he waited for a rider  
a rider, not a master.  
For such needed one another.



only the rider  
would know them in true path,  
and only  
the horse could carry them there.  
there was a distinctly strong horse.



# CONVERT



MY CHILDREN, HEAR ME. I AM FORGIVE ALEX. LEUFF TRANSLIT.  
MAN-WITH-DIRECT-PIPELINE-TO-THAMAHAS-ENTRIES-AND-ADAD  
GOES-OF-FUN-AND-LIGHT. I COME TO SHOW YOU THE WAY  
TO EVERLASTING LIGHT TO CONVERT YOU FROM HEATHEN  
MANKINDS AND AWAY FROM FALSE GODS. MY CHILDREN.

WE ARE NOT CHILDREN. WE  
ARE TRUE PEOPLE AND OUR  
GODS ARE THE TRUE GODS.

AYE TUTU,  
TAWAIN AND  
AKOESSI.

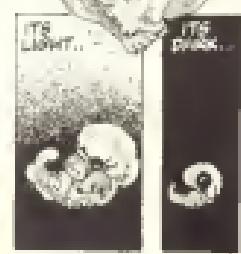
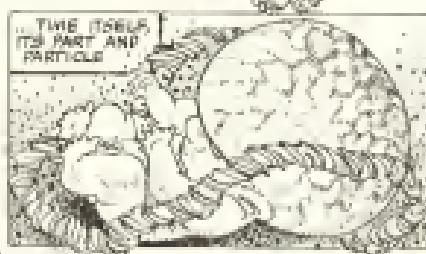
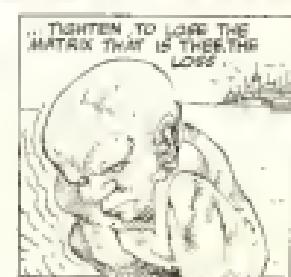
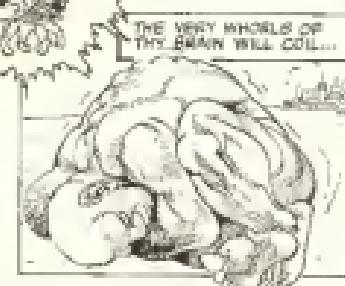


TARRY AN WHILE  
MY SON, AND  
I WILL GIVE  
THEIR TO THE  
TRUE GODS.

FOUL-FATNESS. WITHOUT  
BATH! I SHALL USE YOUR  
ENTRALIS TO FORETELL  
MY FUTURE.

WHAT FUTURE, MY SON? I SEE NO  
FUTURE FOR THESE... BUT A PAST  
BEYOND THE PAST, BEYOND TIME.





THOU ART - NOW, WITH  
NARU - TIME ITSELF  
TIME.



AND THOU I THOU  
ART THIS  
SHAMAN?

THEIR  
PROST.  
SIGH.

...AND YOUR  
SERVANT

I SHALL PLACE THIS IN THINE EAR  
SHORTLY. THOU SHALT KNOW ALL I  
KNOW. OUR GOOD BOOK, OUR  
HISTORY, ALL PHASES OF OUR  
TECHNOLOGY DOWN TO THE VERY  
MICROSCOPES ON MY SHIP.

WITH SUCH  
UNDERSTANDING  
THOU... I SHALT  
EASILY CONVERT  
THEIR TO THE  
TRUE GODS.

IN THE DUSK PINKING THERE WAS LIGHT AND THOU CAME TO US YESTERDAY.  
LOADS OF ROLLING IN OF DODGY OLD TECHNOLOGY THAT COULD  
CURE CANCER, DISEASES... AND OTHER STUFF. THOU COME WITH  
THEIR. THOU WERE A STRANGE ONE. THOU WERE NOT LIKE THEM.  
CONVENTIONAL BELIEFS TO THEM WERE ATTACHED WITH QUADRATIC  
POLYNOMIALS. THOU WERE A DIFFERENT BREED. THOU WERE AN  
ANTHROPOLOGIST. THOU WERE A PHILOSOPHER. THOU WERE A  
PHYSICIST. THOU WERE A CONSPIRATOR. THOU WERE A MUSICOLOGIST.  
THOU WERE A POLITICAL SCIENTIST. THOU WERE A POLITICAL SCIENTIST.  
THOU WERE A POLITICAL SCIENTIST. THOU WERE A POLITICAL SCIENTIST.





ACROSS THE VAST PLAIN, THE DISTANT  
FIGURE APPEARED LIKE A FLY—WITH  
TWO TINY HORNS SQUEEZING CLOSELY  
BEHIND



FOOTSTEPS GREW AUDIBLE AND A FIGURE DREW CLOSER... IT WAS A "GOON", DRAGGING SOMETHING BEHIND ON A ROPES

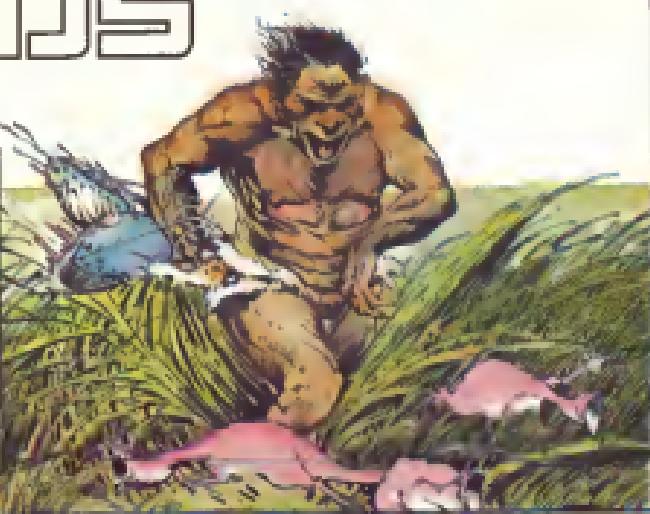


# HEADS

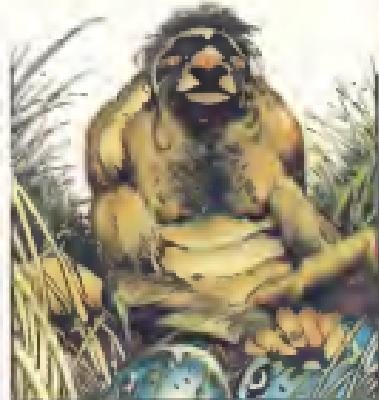
THE BRITISH HAD SUNKED, ONLY  
THE STRONGEST HAD SURVIVED.  
ALL TRADE HAD BEEN DESTROYED  
AND ONLY HE HAD ESCAPED WITH  
THE INFORMATION

"FOUR DAYS HE ROALED ON AND ON -  
NEVER STOPPING TO EAT, TO DRINK,  
OR TO SLEEP. BUT NO LONGER  
COULD HIS POWERFUL BODY OBEY  
THE COMMAND TO FLEE.

THE HEADS WERE SOO HEAVY FOR  
ADM. AND HIS BROTHERS AND  
COULD PULL THEM NO FURTHER  
ALTHOUGH STOPPING HEART  
CERTAIN DEATH AT THE PAROLELESS  
HANDS OF THE BAGHT TRIBE HE  
HEADED THE BOARD OF BAGHT THE  
HEADS WOULD SWING TO THE FOLLO  
WING BAGHTS AND FOR A MOMENT  
NO STRUGGLE SURVIVED AND HE  
DIED ON.

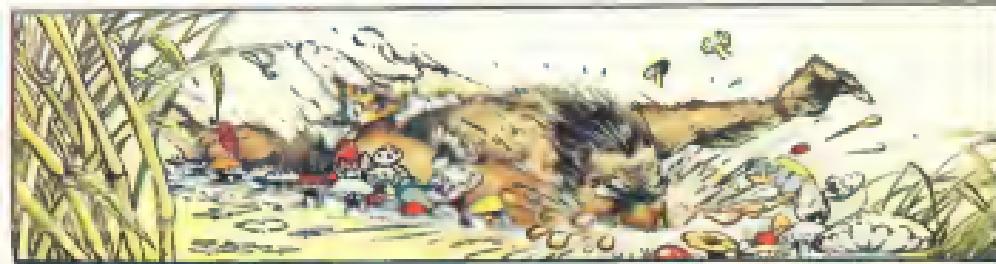


BUT HIS WEAKNESS ENPOWERED HIM  
AND DELIVERED HIM, AS HIS TWO HEADS IN A  
CLUMP OF GRASS, TURNING TO  
RETURN FOR THEM



UNARMED TO HIS  
PURSUERS ON THE  
OPEN PLAIN, HE  
SOUTHERN THE  
SANCTUARY OF THE  
DISTANT FOREST.  
NOWHERE WAS CLOSE.

BUDDHAYA, HIS  
WARRIOR'S  
ORGANIC  
BECAME A BLACK  
CLOUD, SURROUNDING  
THE GIANT AS  
HE SCREAMED, SWAYING  
LIKE A TREE IN  
THE WIND. THEN,



HIS HARD BODY SANK INTO THE SOFT MOSS  
THAT CARPETED THE FOREST FLOOR,  
CALMING THE MUSHROOMS AND TOADSTOOLS  
INTO A PALMY PILLOW.



AN EERIE SILENCE  
FOLLOWS NO MAN  
SINCE SINCE THE  
GODDESS NO  
CREATURE STIRRED.



UNTIL...



FROM UNDER COLOSSAL BODIES, TINY ARMS AND LEGS MOVED, TINY EYES PERIODICALLY WANDERED, STUCK AT THE GIANT FALLEN FROM THE SKY.

UNDER THE SKY, HUNDREDS OF OTHER TINY ARMS AND LEGS OF THOSE LITTLE FORTUNATE RESCUERS, CENTAURS-LIKE, THE AIR WAS FILLED WITH THE PUNGENT AROMA OF THE OCEANIC FRUIT THESE CRUSHED LITTLE BODIES.



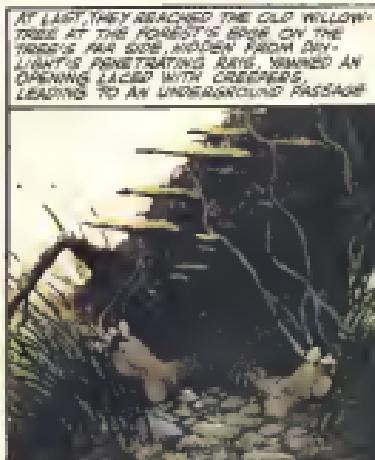
"THE QUEEN," CRIED THE DRONES,



"THE QUEEN HAS BEEN CRUSHED!"



MASTERING THEIR FORGES, THE DRONES RAISED THE BODY AND CARRIED HIM OFF.



AT LAST THEY REACHED THE OLD WILLOW TREE AT THE FOREST'S EDGE. ON THE THREE FAR SIDE, HIDDEN FROM DAY-LIGHT'S PENETRATING RAYS, HUNG AN OPENING LACED WITH CREEPERS, LEADING TO AN UNDERGROUND PASSAGE.

NEARBY...

DO DE DOO OH BOOBY RACCOON TEAM...

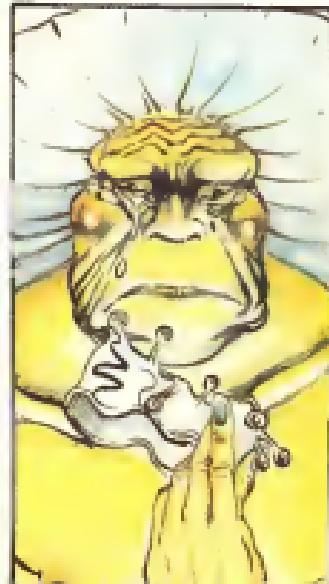
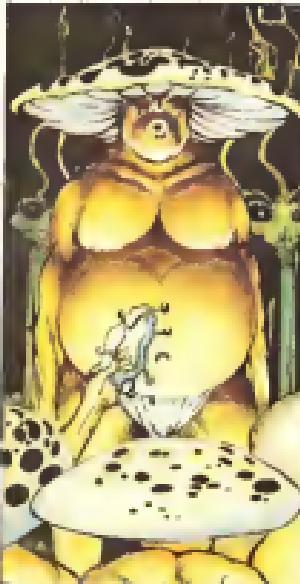
HIGH F. VIBRATIS  
PIG 2

LOONY HERB!  
DA TRACKEY END IN  
DA PATCH O SQUISHED  
MUSHROOMS... VAWAT  
WE GOINNA DO NOW?

DAF DOODY-  
BUTT COON IS  
AROUND HERE  
SOMWHERE... I  
CAN SMELL 'IM  
WE'RE NOT  
TURNIN' BACK  
TILL HIS HEAD'S  
RANGIN' ON MY  
POLE.

YEAH, BUT NODDY  
FROM OUR TRAPPIE COME  
DIS FAR BEFORE I POINT  
LIKE DIS PLACE... IT GIVES  
ME O' CREEPS.

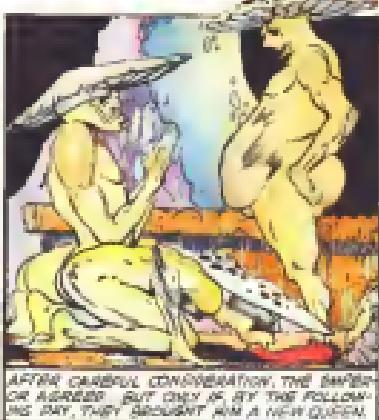
MEANWHILE, THE EMPEROR  
LEARNED OF THE EMPRESS'S  
DEATH FROM HIS FAITHFUL  
GUARDS.



HIS SHRILLED SILENCE QUICKLY TRANSFORMED ITSELF INTO A BURSTING RAGE, AND HE ORDERED THEM STARTING UP ONE OR TWO PLANE BY THEIR PRIVATE PLATES.



"TWEEZY!" PLEASED THE DRONES. "WE HAVE SIAN THE ACCUSED SURFACE SPACER. NOW WE HAVE A PLAN. HIS ACROSS WENT FERTILE! IF WE PLANT SPEROS ON HIM WE CAN GROW THOUSANDS OF NEW MURKORDS. SURELY, THERE WOULD BE AT LEAST ONE QUEEN."



"AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION, THE EMPEROR AGREED. BUT ONLY IF, BY THE FOLLOWING DAY, THEY BROUGHT HIM A NEW QUEEN."

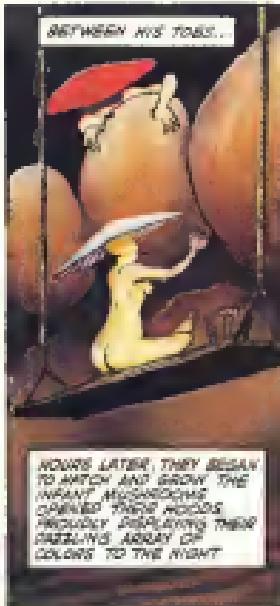
"THT NIGHT, THE WORKERS GATHERED FOR THE BRIGHTEST DARK SPOTS, EACH WITH A BUCKET FULL OF FERTILE SPEROS. THEY PLANTED THEM IN MURKORDS."



AND NOSE...



BETWEEN HIS TOES...



UNTIL...



...HOURS LATER, THEY BEGAN TO MARCH AND GROW THE INFANT MUSHROOMS. THEY CARRIED THESE HODDS PROUDLY DISPLAYING THEIR GROWING ABILITY OF COLORING TO THE NIGHT.



ONE HAD THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING THE KING HAD SEEN FOR HOURS. HE SAT MOTIONLESS, ADMIRING HIS NEW MATE. NEWS OF THE QUEEN'S BIRTH SPREAD THROUGH THE KINGDOM FROM ALL DIRECTIONS. THEY CAME TO SEE HER...



SUDDENLY, THE GOON BEGAN TO MOVE.

WHEEEEEEEEEEEE?



E EEE

E EEE

A QUEEN!  
A QUEEN!



# ZA

## CHAPTER II

YOU NEVER CHANGED THAT HAS  
BECOME MAJOR PART OF YOU IN  
FACT, UP UNTIL LAST NIGHT ALSO  
YOU HAD NO IDEA WHERE A  
ARMED WIFE.

ISN'T IT FRIGHTENING HOW  
MANY CONCRETE AND IRONIES  
THERE ARE THAT YOU WEREN'T  
EVEN SLIGHTLY AWARE OF?  
REMEMBER THAT YOU NOW  
UNDERSTAND, IDEALLY.



THINK FOR A WHILE THE FACT THAT YOU LIVE ON A PLANET CALLED TYDOR WHICH CREATS THE STAK, ALTHOUGH CENTURIES YOU NEVER FOUND ANYTHING. SO YOU HAD DISBELIEVE IT PLACE IT WAS WITH LITTLE WATER, NO MINERAL WEALTH, PLANT LIFE OR ANIMALS, GAVE YOU TYDORIANS, PERHAPS THAT'S WHY THE TYDORIANS HAVE OVERLOOKED YOUR WORLD. YOUR PEOPLE WOULD NOT EVEN MAKE GOOD SLAVES.



FOR EVEN THOUGH THE TYDORIAN RACE HAS EXISTED OVER THIRTY MILLION YEARS, IT HAS BARELY EVOLVED ABOVE BESTIALITY.

IT WAS A CRUEL BIOLOGICAL TEST OF THE RACE THAT SET YOU TYDORIANS TYDORIANS UPON A WORLD THAT REFUSED TO SUPPORT ANY FORM OF LIFE OTHER THAN YOUR OWN.



YOUR RACE'S ONLY CHOICE WAS DANKOMALISM OR EXTINCTION.

LUCKILY YOUR SPICES PREP AND BREW SO MASTHOOD QUICKLY AND THAT YOUR ATMOSPHERE CONTAINED SOME STRANGE ANTOXERASIS ELEMENT THAT ENABLED YOUR PEOPLE TO MULTIPLY FASTER THAN THEY COULD DEVOUR EACH OTHER.

IT'S ALSO SURPRISING THAT YOUR PEOPLE NEVER EVOLVED MUCH. SO YOU HAD LEFT LITTLE TIME FOR IMPROVEMENT.



THAT'S THE WAY ONE ALWAYS BEEN ON TYDOR, THAT IS, UNTIL YOU WERE BORN.

LIFE IN THE MOUNTAINS WAS SO DULL  
WAS IT NOT? YOUR MOTHER HAD NOT  
TOLD SOUTHERN THE IDEA INTO HER HEAD  
TO FARM THEM AND HER MIND WAS  
ALWAYS ON THEM.



ALL HAVE GOOD AND MORAL MANNERS  
AND ARE WELL EDUCATED. YOU DON'T  
THINK THERE ARE NO BRAZILIAN WOMEN  
NO TIME PLEASURE OR FRIENDSHIP IS NOT  
TO GET. YOU WERE RECOMMENDED BY  
THE TRADE AND SOCIETY, BUT ARE  
BECAUSE IT WAS DESCRIBED OF



A FEW MOMENTS LATER, YOU FOUND THAT YOUR FRIENDS HAD BEEN ASKED TO ATTEND A TASTY SOIREE ARRANGED BY THE COUPLE.



Fortunately, you had the wisdom of youth and the bright heart of smoking anything within reach into your mouth.

THIS YOU REACHED UP WITHIN BY  
DISCOVERING THAT THE ~~ADAMANT~~  
COMPOSITION WHICH COULD SOLVE  
WORLD WIDE PROBLEMS.



...AND, AS A RESULT, HE WAS  
ALMOST IMMEDIATELY  
RECOGNIZED AS THE LEAD  
CHARACTER AND STAN-  
DED OUT TO ALL  
WHO, AROUND THE  
TOWN, ORGANIZED  
TROOPS THAT  
CONSTANTLY RAILED  
THEM DOWN.



YOU HAVE BEEN NO FRIEND TO THE  
CROSS SINCE YOU LEFT YOUR PARENTS,  
BUT DON'T WORRY, SOON  
PROVIDENCE WILL CALL YOU  
TO HIM. YOU SHAW INTO A FINE  
SPECIMEN OF TWO, I AM SURE.



WATSON  
WATSON  
WATSON  
WATSON  
WATSON



JOHN L. PELLETIER  
JOHN M. SCHAFFER  
JOHN M. SCHAFFER  
JOHN M. SCHAFFER



YOU  
WANT  
TO  
DO  
THAT  
YOU  
CAN  
DO

THEY WERE UPON YOU, BUTTING  
AND THRESHING, BEFORE YOU  
WERE EVEN AWARE OF THEM.

TOO BRAVING  
MUCH THINKING



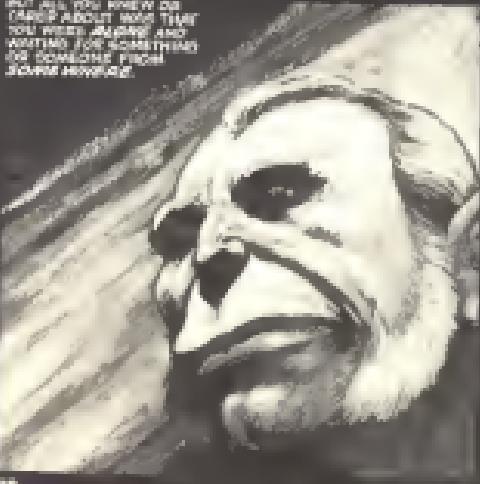
TOO UNPREDICTED



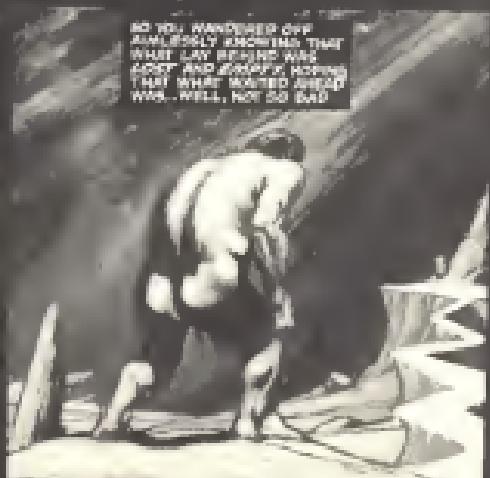
YOU WERE SURPRISED AT HOW STRONG YOU WERE.  
BUT THEN YOU DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE MORE  
POWERFUL THAN ANY OF THOSE TYRANNICAL MALES.

IT WAS YOUR GIFT OF BEING  
ENTITLED THAT MADE YOU SO

PUT ALL YOU KNEW ON  
PAPER ABOUT. MORE THAN  
YOU WERE ABLE AND  
WAITING FOR SOMETHING  
OR SOMETHING FROM  
SCARY MONSTERS.

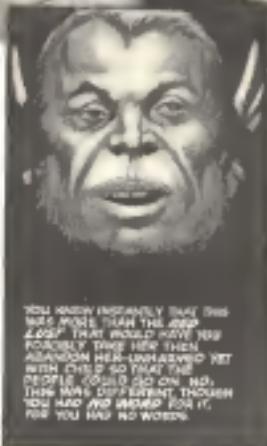


SO YOU WANDERED OFF  
ALMOSTLY KNOWING THAT  
WHAT LAY BEHIND WAS  
SCARY AND DANGEROUS, HOPING  
THAT WHAT WAITED AHEAD  
WAS... WELL, NOT SO BAD





IT ISN'T THAT LONG  
AFTERWARD THAT  
YOU SAW ME.



YOU KNEW INSTANTLY THAT THIS  
WAS WORSE THAN THE JAW  
LOSS THAT WOULD HAVE NEV-  
ER POSSIBLY TAKE HER THEN  
ABANDON HIM UNHARMED YET  
WITH THIS SO THAT ONE  
DID NOT KNOW. NO,  
THIS WAS DIFFERENT, THOUGH  
YOU HAD NO WORDS FOR IT  
FOR YOU HAD NO WORDS



YOU MEANT BY SCATTERING FOOD  
FOR HER, SHE FEARED YOU BUT  
ACCEPTED IT.



HE TURNED TO SOMETHING ELSE  
WHEN YOU DROVE OFF. THOSE  
WHO WOULD HAVE MADE  
A MEAL OF HIM



THE SHORT TIME THAT  
FOLLOWS WAS SICK  
BECAUSE YOU DRO-  
VE ON. IT WAS ALL  
HE COULD DO IN THE  
CRAZY WAY, PLAYED IT  
WOULD ANYHOW END



THEN ONE DAY WHILE YOU WERE  
DRIVING ON, HEH, YOU SUDDEN-  
LY ARRIVED. YOU KNEW IT  
SINCE RACED BACK TO HELL.





BUT IT WAS TOO LATE

ONCE AGAIN, THE ADMIRER RETURNED, HOW  
WORSE-THAN EVER, FOR THE FAIR WAS NOW  
BONDED TO A 4000-POUND DEEP

SOMETHING HAD AWAKENED WITHIN  
YOU THAT MATURED AND NEVER  
WANTING FOR A FRIEND TO FEEL.

IT TOOK FROM WITHIN  
YOUR MIGHTY FRAME,  
IT FORGED WITHIN  
YOUR HEAD, THERE  
WAS NO WAY TO STOP  
THE FAIR, AND ITS  
CROWN HAD ALL  
DEFINITION.



SO YOU CLIMBED HIGH AND  
THE CLOUD SHRODED FEARS  
PLANNING TO END THE  
FORTUNE IN ONE AND  
PLUNGE.



BUT INSTEAD FOUND UNDERSTANDING  
AND A FAIR FOR THE FAIR

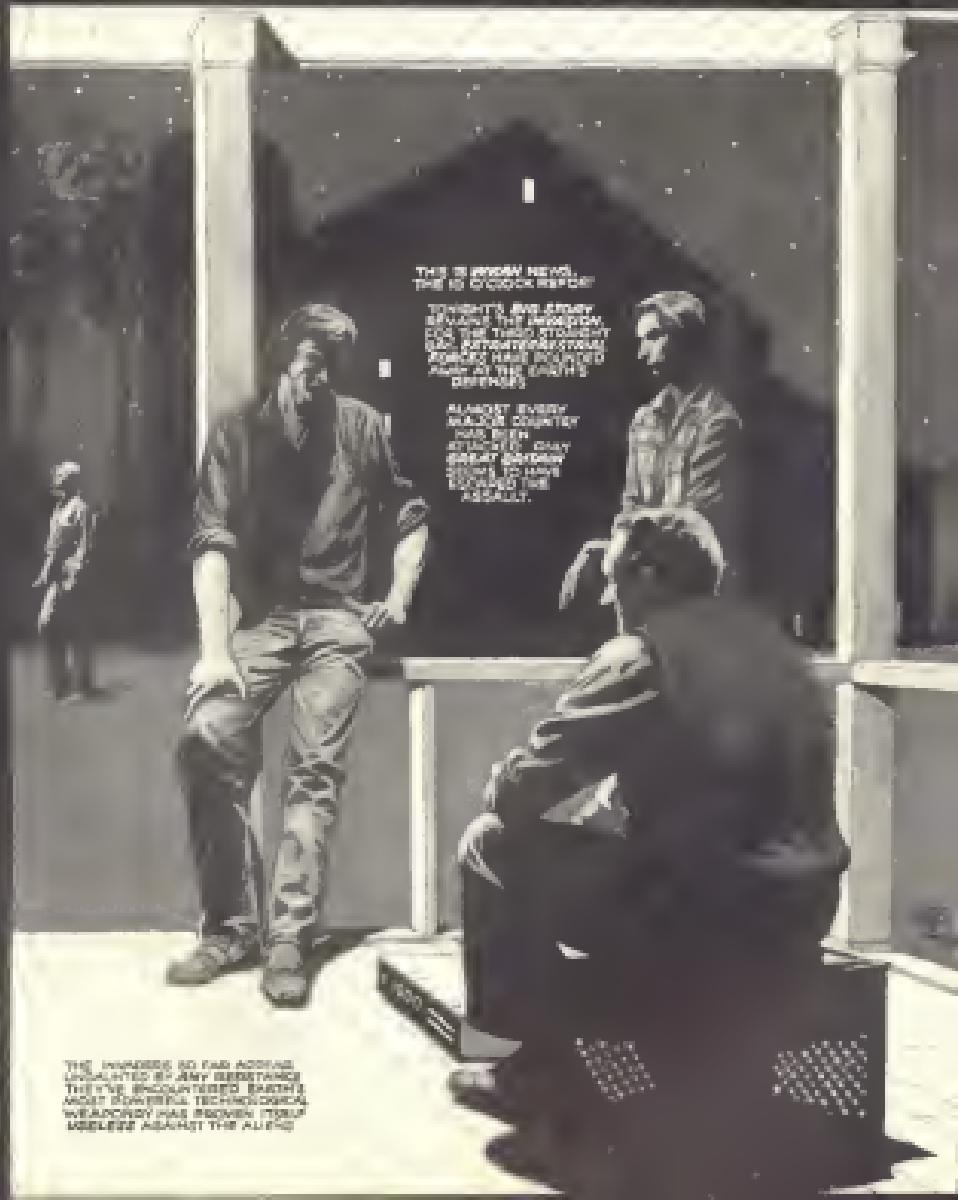




METAMORPHOSIS ODYSSEY

CHAPTER III

# Juliet



THIS IS SPLENDID. IT IS NOT  
THE END OF OUR CHAOS.

TONIGHT, JULIET,  
BEGINS THE UNIFICATION  
FOR THE THREE ATTORNEYS  
AND PATRIOTIC STREETS.  
AMONG THEM, SOON  
TO FOLLOW, ARE THE  
CITIZENS.

ALMOST EVERY  
VALOIS COUPON  
HAS BEEN  
ATTACHED. ONLY  
SIXTY SEVEN  
STILL TO GO.  
WE ARE THE  
MAJORITY.

THE INVADERS SO FAR HAVE  
ISOLATED BY ANY RESISTANCE  
WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE  
ARMED GUERRILLA TACTICAL  
WEAPONS WHICH HAVE SHOWN ITSELF  
USELESS AGAINST THE ALIENS.

REFUGES HOME TO THEIR  
FARM FOLK, CITY KIDS,  
MILLERS AND BURNERS.  
F.B.I., THIS MAKES IT THE  
NEW MAJOR U.S. CITY  
LOW IN ENEMY HANDS.

AROUND THE WORLD, THE U.S.S.R. IS  
REPORTED TO HAVE COLLAPSED UNDER  
THE HEAVILY DISASTERS ASSAULT ITS  
CITIES. THE UNHAPPY REPORTS  
OF ALIEN ASSAULTS

ALL COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE  
PEOPLES' REPUBLIC OF CHINA  
WAN, CERTAINLY, WHICH IS BEING  
ATTACKED UNCONTROLLABLY.  
RECENTLY, REPORTS SAY THE ISLAND OF  
HAWAII HAS BEEN SWORN.

DATACHIEFS FROM  
THE CHINESE ARMY  
TELL OF HUNDREDS  
OF HUNDREDS OF  
REFUGES AND  
OIL FIELDS.

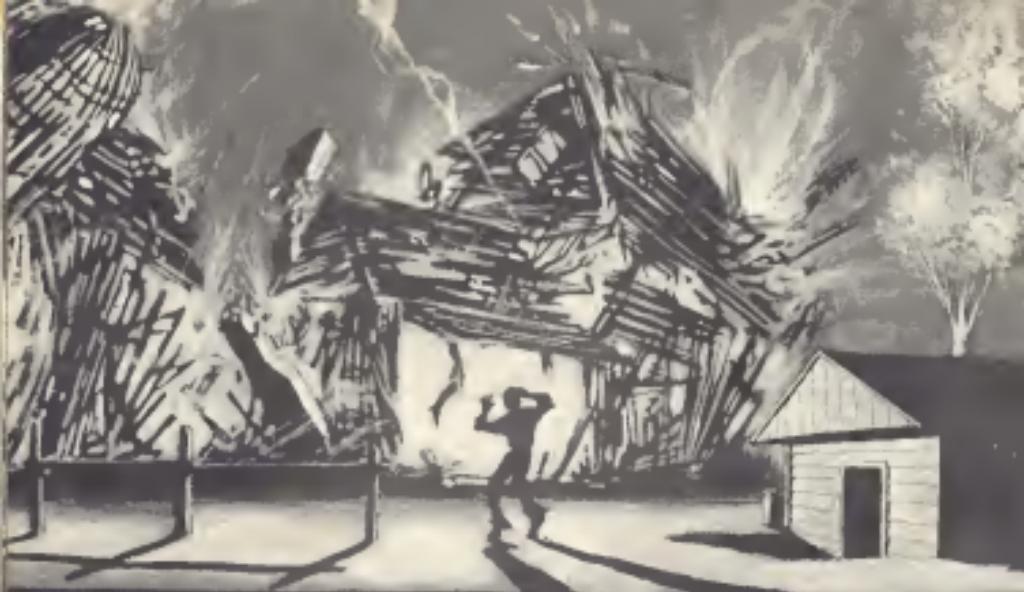
BUT THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS CONTINUED  
TO DESIRE TODAY ON THE NEED FOR EMPLOYING  
NUCLEAR WARFARE AGAINST THE AGGRESSORS.  
AND CONCUSSION WAS REACHED.

THE PENDRAGON CLAIMS THAT SPY SATELLITES  
HAVE CONFIRMED REPORTS THAT AUSTRALIA  
IS BEING USED AS A BASE OF OPERATIONS  
BY THE ENEMY.

TOP MILITARY EXPERTS  
ARE PLANNING FOR AN  
IMMEDIATE AIRBORNE  
OPERATION ON THE  
DOWN UNDER.

MEANWHILE, ON  
THE SPORTS SCENE,  
4X 40000 CROSSED.











MY FRIEND'S NAME IS  
ZIA. WE'VE COME TO  
RESCUE YOU.

BUT I CAN'T  
LEAVE EARTH  
NOW. IT'S AN  
HONOR TO BE A  
DEFENDER.

YOUR WORLD IS  
DECOMING, DEAR. IT  
IS THE SOURCE OF  
DESTRUCTION, THE  
STRUCTURE OF  
CHAOS.

YOUR JUMPING WOULD  
ONLY ADD ONE MORE  
SICKLE TO THE MILLIONS  
LOST BEHIND THE  
COMING EARTH  
INJECTION.

WHAT IS IT YOU  
CHOSE TO SAVE  
LAST NIGHT?

FOR I SENSED  
SHEWWY HAD  
DEPARTED YOU  
FESTINATELY.

GRANDMOTHER, I NEED  
TO TALK WITH THE FRIEND  
OF EARTH.

THE EARTHANS ARE A  
SOCIETY PROUD OF ARMED  
FORCES THAT ARE DESTROYING  
AND DESTROYING THE  
GALAXY FOR THEIR OWN  
TWISTED REASONS.

DON'T  
WORRY.

AS I SAID, I  
DOO-MED. BUT  
THERE ARE DIFFERENT  
SHADES OF DEATH.

THAT IS THE SLOW  
AND DESTRUCTIVE DEATH  
OF EARTHIAN  
DECOMPOSITION.

THEY  
MUST BE  
STOPPED.

FOR  
ONE WORLD  
STOP THEM.

A MUSCLE CLOUD  
CLOUDS OVER THAT  
DESTRUCTIVE, NON  
-LIVING KNEE.

DEATH CALLED  
BY SILENTLY DESTROYING  
DECOMPOSITION OF  
YOUR WORLD'S ENTIRE  
STRUCTURE OR  
ATOMIC WEAPONS.





STAYING  
JAIL.

IT'S BETTER  
THIS WAY.



© Bush

trucks just drove off in opposite directions.

The road grew rough. Lifting him, looking straight ahead, Steve could make out a bright light on the horizon. At least he wasn't the only fool driving this lousy back road. Only, as the light grew more intense, it didn't look like a car.

The light appeared to be above the road, not on it. Too high for an ordinary vehicle. A low-lying planet? His heart began to race. His palms grew damp, hampering his grip on the wheel.

It was almost directly on him, blind, blinding.

The Elder's trying to hit me! He slammed on the brakes. The car went sliding, skidding sideways. Finally, coming to a halt, fell onto the shoulder.

Shaken, dizzy, Steve raised his head, slowly and behold, a great shaft of light that flooded the ground all around started. He felt a desire, a compulsion, to step into its light. Hardly had he felt it, than he was done. Enveloped by the light, Steve looked up. Somewhere above him was the sun. Huge enough to make scale and distance impossible to judge.

He felt a sense of melting, of fading away, taking physical sensations to become pure thought.

Then he was no longer on the road, but standing inside the ship, aware of its magnificence: walls lined with shelves of equipment, great banks of control consoles spread out around him. And resting was a figure. Humanoid. Hair sheer, face stately, defined but somehow showing great age.

"Welcome, my friend. While your presence is one with my ship, I am able to communicate with you, in your language. You have come to respond to our call. Do not be afraid. I am the Elder. I seek your help."

Steve stood frozen, unable to respond. From beyond the stately figure, three short, conical ears entered the chamber. They were distinctly unhuman.

"Do not be alarmed," the Elder said, "these are merely my servants. Come tell me show you some wisdom."

He led Steve toward one of the walls with shelf after shelf of glass-like, odd-shaped containers, tilted, with what looked to be tiny sparks.

"Within these crucibles are the electronic essence of some of the greatest minds of my race. It is much the same process as your went through to get inside here. You see, my planet is suffering greatly from a lack of energy."

"Energy crisis?" Steve said.

"Exactly!" The Elder pointed to the gear ship's interior. "All this mechanical stuff, the billions, of light-years I've traveled... All are for the sole purpose

of finding a new energy source. All the supreme intellects combined within the civilization are just waiting to be summoned at the radio."

"But what do you want with me?"

Before he received an answer, Steve began to rise off the floor. Every object, not in some way fastened down began to float and drift, clattering the room. Through the swirling debris, Steve saw the Elder swimming toward his servants.

"The switch," he was yelling, "TURN THE SWITCH!"

For an instant there was silence. Then a tremendous crash. Steve found himself suddenly sprawled on the floor. Rubble was everywhere. The Elder's voice echoed through the chamber.

"How many times must I tell you not to fool with the anti-gravity controls? You three will never learn."

From where he sprawled on the floor, the Elder himself lay Steve's direction. His eyes fell on the great quantities of broken glass among the rubble.

"The... crucible?"

The Elder looked from the glass to the ceiling. Steve followed his gaze. Millions of tiny sparks danced in the chamber's upper-spectrum.

"All is lost!" the Elder cried.

"Not so fast!" Steve pointed to the shadows. "There are still many left."

"It's the name, Centaur. Dumars, among them."

Steve scanned the remaining rows of containers. "The sorry old name's not here."

"Just as well," the Elder grumbled under his breath. "He was always a troublemaker anyway."

Steve cleared his throat. "We were talking about why you needed me."

"For your knowledge, of course," the Elder explained as he rose and faced Steve. "And for what you can bring us from your homeworld. It's Jerome that we need desperately."

"Jerome? A human-anomalous chimpanzee. I doubt if he's ever been even a thinkable prospect on Earth."

The Elder's stately face grew red. He swung himself around and stampeded across the floor, bunting away the many small sparks that continued to infest the air like mosquitoes. Steve followed him. They halted at foot of a large star map projection.

"Is this not the fourth planet of the Andromeda Galaxy?" the Elder demanded as he pointed to a small dot on the chart.

"No," Steve replied. "It's not."

As the Elder's shoulders sagged, Steve thought of the stack of newspapers on his car seat, and of the one lone job ad he had called him there.

"None you ever considered," Steve added, "the possibility of replacing those three servants?"

# DETOUR

Art and Story by George Bush

**T**he headlights cut through the night like a knife, searching out the eternal ribbon of road. Steve was blind. His eyes burned, his body ached. His movements and reactions had become automatic, one with the car bringing him closer to his destination still, Steve thought, it could be no need yet another curve, it could be worth it.

He reached for the clipping atop the pile of newspapers on the seat beside him. By the dashboard, he could only make out the bold words: HELP WANTED. Reading it again wouldn't do anything. It would still be vague in the distance, yet somehow strangely suited to him.

Steve concentrated on the road he was approaching. Nothing but darkness in all directions. He tapped his high beams. They revealed a touch, actually read than he expected.

Some sort of short-cut or temporary bypass.

His thoughts went back to the new job. Not actually his yet, but with the string of bad luck behind him, he was due his bad to be.

"Not much call for seeking a ride to the moon anymore. Or any place else. Gated communities all this. People with no



# TOPAZ

BY DAVE RUS





BY AESTHETICALLY  
ALTERING THESE LANDS,  
MY WORK ACHIEVES  
DEEPER FEELING  
AND PERSONAL  
EXPRESSION



### NEXT ISSUE:

Cover by Richard Corben

An all-new science-fiction adventure from Samuel Delany & Howard Chaykin

Robert E. Howard's *Almuric* by Roy Thomas & Tom Conrad

P. Craig Russell brings his unique graphics to Richard Wagner's *Skylight*

Jim Starlin's *Metamorphosis Odyssey* continues, now in full color

All these plus Steve Bissette, Rick Veitch, Archie Goodwin, Robert Wakelin,

Dana Grajunas, Ernie Colón, and many, many more

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# epic

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# ENDGAME

## contributors

Putting together the first issue of a magazine is an exciting thing. The promise and potential of *Epic* discussed by editor/publisher Stan Lee in his editorial are a large part of that excitement. So too, for us, are the physical contents, from the striking cover by Frank Frazetta (and along with Frank, we should thank Eliot Pazzetta, whose cooperation made getting the cover possible) to designer Noa Macin's layout and typography for this very page. We're excited, but, in the contrary way of editorial folk, not quite satisfied. Though material for *Epic* has been underway for the better part of a year, Mill Schaffman, our production V.P., still had to almost rip some of the pages from our hands lest we start redesigning a page or reconsidering the line-up (which has been made and remade more times than the beds at a Holiday Inn). What, *editor* wants, particularly in a first issue, is perfection. Naturally, we never quite achieve it. Hopefully, we'll come a little bit closer with each succeeding *Epic*. The hardest part of queuing for this particular Holy Grail was disappointing the artists and writers who had counted on being part of the first issue but then found their jobs taken out in the name of format, pacing, and editorial paranoia. Did we make all the right choices? That'll probably still be debated long after *Epic* 1 is a plastic-bagged collector's item on someone's closet shelf. So, before going on to talk about some of this issue's contributors, we'd like to thank those other contributors whose jobs are still waiting in the wings. If future *Epics* are also collector's items, it'll be due to them.

If space was at such a premium this time around, how is it that we devoted so many pages to one story, *Metamorphosis Odyssey*? Well, aside from the fact that we've been crazy about Jim Starlin's art and writing since he was doing *Captain Marvel* (no, not the one who yells Shazzam) and *Warlock* in our regular comic books, it seemed any magazine called

*Epic* ought to have at least one feature which genuinely reflected that in scope and proportion. With its storyline of war and vengeance on a cosmic scale, *Metamorphosis Odyssey*, planned by Jim to run some twelve to fifteen chapters, definitely fills the bill. We realize a continuing series in a quarterly book leaves a long wait between installments, so we decided to start off with a large chunk to whet your interest. And if the conclusion of Chapter III doesn't imprint itself strongly enough to carry you over to *Epic* 2, then we've destroyed an entire world for nothing.

Doing graphic stories (as more serious types are apt to call comics) generally requires that the artist perform all the functions which in a play or film would be spread among a director, actor, set designer, and costume department. Ray Rue seems more qualified than most to step into all those shoes. Born Raymond Wulffewski in 1951, Ray was raised in Lumberton, New Jersey. A self-taught artist, he began his career back in the psychedelic sixties as a body painter at New York's Electric Circus. In 1969, he went to Boston to study acting, and worked there for some



Artist Ray Rue

nine years. His roles have included Renfield in *Dracula* and Reipupin in *The Penal Colony*. During this time he worked as a freelance illustrator, a scenic and costume designer, and eventually was creative director for two Boston advertising agencies. Ray has also been an animator for Labinger Studios, working on a number of award-winning films for WGBH and for the ABC television network

in 1972. He cowrote a children's musical *Fables and Tales*, which became a Play of the Month Club selection. His work has appeared in *Heavy Metal*, *Boston Magazine*, and *Playbill*. "Lullaby of Bedlam" marks his debut as a writer of fantasy.

New Jersey is also the birthplace of Arthur Suydam, author and illustrator of "Heads." He too is largely self-taught, starting drawing at the age of 4 by studying art books. Other influences included the Famous Artists course. Through it, Albert Dorne and Norman Rockwell became influences on his work. In 1969, at the ripe old age of 17, Art almost had work accepted by Warren Publishers, until they learned how old he was and suggested he come back in a year after finishing high school. Instead, he showed up unannounced at DC comics, impressing their editorial staff with his moody approach to horror stories and gaining him a prompt assignment in their *House of Secrets* title. Used to writing his material, he found the awkwardness of following a storywriter's art directions frustrating. This, combined with restrictions on the size of working originals, resulting in his taking six months to do that first story. Later

he rapidly approached and we haven't had time to go into detail about a great many contributors who deserve full coverage, such as Bob Lark and George Bush, both well-regarded paperback illustrators who, this time out, were as well. Nor have we spotlighted Carl Potts, who divides his time between advertising illustration and comics. Wendy Pini, who writes, illustrates, and publishes her own popular limited press fantasy series, *Elfquest*. Eric Colon, whose work has covered an incredible range from *Richie Rich* to Warren humor stories to



Artist Kristine

offered their successful *Swamp Thing* character, Art decided he'd never be able to make the deadlines and turned from mainstream comics to successfully writing and illustrating his own stories. His work now appears regularly in *National Lampoon*, *Heavy Metal*, and, if we have anything to say about it, *Epic*.

Archie Goodwin was born in Belgrade, Socialist Republic of

Bosnia in 1956, but his fine-line approach to political fantasy seems to transcend any land or language. A graduate of the School of Applied Arts in Zagreb, Ilic' new works on comics, newspaper illustrations, and poster design. Prior to this, he worked for Zagreb Film. His comics have been published since 1975 in youth papers as well as official newspapers. Recently, he formed a group of young Yugoslav comic designers, Novikavrat. Ilic' has participated in 13 collective and one individual exhibition and was awarded first prize in the First Yugoslav Comic Strip Competition.

The end of the column is rapidly approaching and we haven't had time to go into detail about a great many contributors who deserve full coverage, such as Bob Lark and George Bush, both well-regarded paperback illustrators who, this time out, were as well. Nor have we spotlighted Carl Potts, who divides his time between advertising illustration and comics. Wendy Pini, who writes, illustrates, and publishes her own popular limited press fantasy series, *Elfquest*. Eric Colon, whose work has covered an incredible range from *Richie Rich* to Warren humor stories to



Artist Art Suydam

*Swamp Thing* without incurring more than the mildest schizophrenia, or John Buscema, Leo Doran, Rudy Nebes, and Rick Veitch. However, since we're looking for reappearances by all these talented people in the future, we'll make a promise to you and them to shed a bit more light in issues to come, starting with *Epic* #2. See you then.

Archie Goodwin